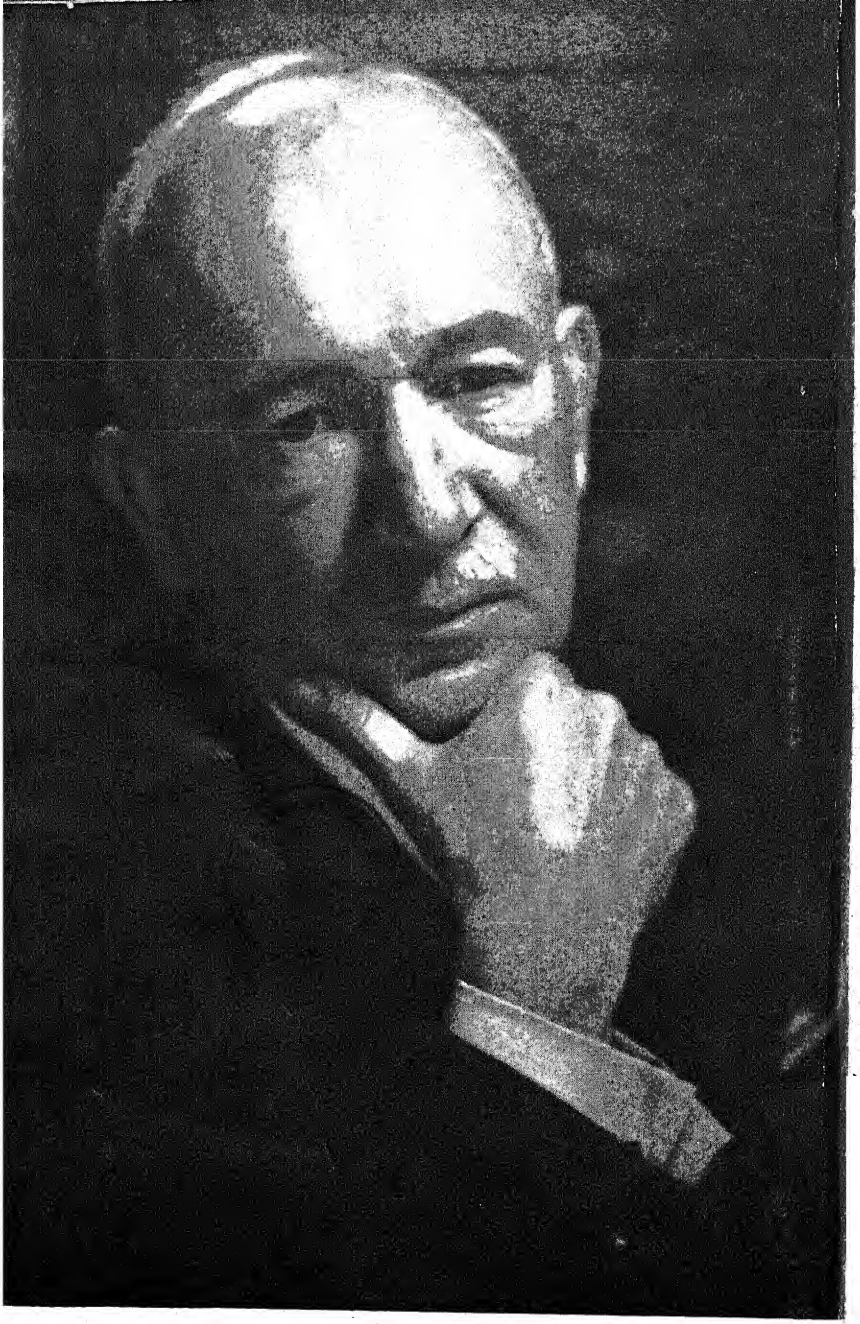
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EDWARD BENEŠ

Essays and Reflections
presented on the occasion of his
Sixtieth Birthday

SIR ERNEST BARKER
THE VISCOUNT CECIL
ROBERT J. KERNER
THE EARL OF PERTH
MATTHEW SPINKA
WICKHAM STEED

AND OTHERS

CHECKED

EDITED BY

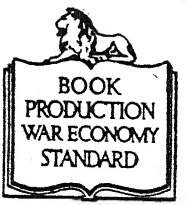
JAN OPOČENSKÝ



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EDVARD BENEŠ

AT the beginning of 1944, when President Beneš's sixtieth birthday was approaching, his Czechoslovak friends decided to produce a book similar to the one which was issued on his fortieth and fiftieth birthdays.

Unlike the two preceding books, ours was undertaken on hospitable and friendly soil, though not at home. This has given the book a twofold character. On the one hand it is clear that the gathering of people in exile here is so fortuitous that it would not be fair that the publication of Czech and Slovak contributions now should prevent our friends at home from offering their tribute to the man who is beloved by the whole nation. In the second place the whole book is intended to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances in which it is issued by emphasizing the common roots of Anglo-Saxon with Czechoslovak interests in the struggle of the British, American, U.S.S.R. and other United Nations' peoples with the common foe.

We have therefore decided to publish in Great Britain only contributions from the President's friends written in English, and to defer the publication of the Czech and Slovak contributions until it is possible for our people at home to take part. I wish to thank my three colleagues in this work, Minister Prokop Maxa, Chairman of the State Council, Mr. Julius Fürth, member of this council, Mr. Prokop Drtina, who have helped me in compiling this book, and Dr. Grigori Harlip for the free use of the portrait as a frontispiece.

JAN OPOČENSKÝ

1st January, 1945

CONTENTS

William Temple
Late Archbishop of Canterbury
page 13

The Earl of Perth
page 15

Raymond Gram Swing
page 17

Viscount Cecil
page 18

Richard Law
page 33

Professor Sir Ernest Barker
page 41

Wickham Steed
page 54

Robert J. Kerner
page 72

R. H. Bruce Lockhart
page 80

CONTENTS

Quincy Wright

page 97

Matthew Spinka

page 107

Felix Weltsch

page 118

Professor A. J. P. Taylor

page 157

S. Harrison Thomson

page 170

Professor R. W. Seton-Watson

page 185

WILLIAM TEMPLE

late Archbishop of Canterbury

I AM most happy to be one of those who are joining to offer to Your Excellency our congratulations and good wishes on your sixtieth birthday.

It has been a great privilege for many English people to have had the opportunity of meeting you during your residence in London, and when the time comes, as we trust that it soon will, for your return to your own country, you will carry with you our most friendly recollections and our most cordial goodwill, both as the representative of your people and as one whom we have learnt to honour the more deeply through having the opportunity of personal intercourse.

April 19th, 1944

THE EARL OF PERTH

CAN it really be that President Beneš has attained the age of three score years? He affirms it himself and knowing his honesty I believe him. May I therefore offer him my respectful congratulations? I should like to take this excellent opportunity to express to him my high appreciation of and thanks for all the work he performed on behalf of the League of Nations in which he was an ardent believer. I owed him a great debt of gratitude when I was Secretary-General of the League, as he greatly helped me by his advice and support.

In old days at Geneva after a meeting of the Council in which he had played a prominent part as representative of his beloved country, we used regularly to have a small gathering of the most prominent members of the League Secretariat to discuss with him the international situation and the best line for the League to take on certain thorny problems. I can see him now, ready to listen to all arguments and after hearing them to expound his own opinion with the greatest clarity and extraordinary knowledge. The premises on which he based his conclusions were completely logical and his remarkable understanding of Slav, Germanic and, though perhaps in a lesser degree, of Anglo-Saxon and of Latin psychologies added greatly to the value of his conclusions. Unhappily he was not able consistently to enforce his wishes as regards foreign affairs even in his own country. Some of his proposals were too wise and far-seeing to be acceptable to important parties in Czechoslovakia who were inclined to adopt opportunist policies. This was peculiarly true in the case of Austria where, had Dr. Beneš's advice been followed, economic relations between that country and the little Entente would have greatly improved to the benefit of all immediately concerned and of Europe as a whole.

Unhappily, too, the outstanding position acquired by Dr. Beneš among the statesmen of Europe aroused jealousy in the minds of those not so gifted, and this even became a cause of some embarrassment in the proceedings of the League. I shall not pursue this subject further, as such ancient controversies had better be left in oblivion. I will only add that Dr. Beneš pursued his purposes for international co-operation undisturbed by any personal feelings or resentment.

Dr. Beneš realized to the full that unity between the Great Powers was the surest safeguard of world peace and spared no effort to effect agreement and compose divergent opinion.

I should like in conclusion to pay a special tribute to his loyalty. He accepted in full both in the spirit and in the letter all the implications of any treaty which his country had concluded, and though he was, I know, often approached with tempting offers by the Germans who endeavoured to wean him from the Franco-Czechoslovak Alliance, he resolutely refused to take any action unfavourable to France.

When the great tragedy occurred, Dr. Beneš bore the trials with steadfastness and endurance. It is only fitting that on his sixtieth birthday he can look forward with confidence to that happy day when the people of a restored, strong and independent Czechoslovakia will again acclaim him as their chosen President.

March 16th, 1944.

RAYMOND GRAM SWING

DR. BENEŠ occupies a unique place in the thoughts of free countries. He has been subjected to a double ordeal, first to be the responsible leader of his country at the time it was sacrificed in the weak days of appeasement; then as the one to whom is entrusted the restoration of his country when it is liberated. In him is the symbolization of the whole of democratic experience of the last years, its unpreparedness and then its full mobilization for victory. No man of any state victimized by the Nazis has more sympathy in free countries. So his sixtieth birthday will bring him the profoundest appreciation and indeed personal affection from all who prize liberty.

April 12th, 1944

VISCOUNT CECIL

Dr. Beneš at Geneva

My first acquaintance with Dr. Beneš as an international statesman arose in this way. When the first World War was nearing its end in August, 1918, he arrived in England on a mission to secure recognition of the State of Czechoslovakia just coming into existence. He approached the Foreign Office and I, as Under-Secretary, took part in the discussion of his proposals. He explained to me what they were and we easily agreed on most of them. I found him a most delightful negotiator. He never put forward extravagant or unreasonable demands. He asked for what he really wanted and what he thought his country was entitled to have and no more.

Another merit of his system was that he never increased his demands in consequence of the acceptance of part of them. Nothing is more irritating, though it is—or was—unhappily common with a certain type of diplomat. Such a one used to put forward his case, part of which was disputed. After some argument the point was conceded, when it was immediately declared to be of little importance in itself; and the concession was used as a starting point for fresh demands.

It was partly because Dr. Beneš never descended to these stupid and rather dishonest tricks that he acquired such an outstanding respect and authority in the Assembly and Council of the League of Nations. He was not a member of the Commission of the Paris Conference in 1919 that framed the Covenant of the League. It may be that, had he been there, the document would have been a better one. It is possible that his admirable realism would have made it even clearer than it was that no international agreement of this kind can succeed unless the parties to it are ready to carry out its provisions, if necessary by force.

However that may be, Dr. Beneš had no responsibility for the drafting of the Covenant. But all the same he, as Foreign Minister of his country, came to the first meeting of the Assembly of the League which was held at Geneva in November 1920. It is often said that the League owed a debt of gratitude to Sir Austen Chamberlain, who was the first British Foreign Minister who attended its meetings. That is quite true. But it should not be forgotten that in this matter the Government of the United Kingdom was following the lead of Czechoslovakia. Had they always followed that lead in subsequent years, world history would have been very different.

From this time forward, Dr. Beneš was a constant and regular attendant at Geneva until he became President of the Republic in 1935. He was always at the meetings of the Assembly and whenever Czechoslovakia was a member of the Council, he came to the meetings of that body. He sat on several of the more important Committees, such as Briand's European Commission and he served several times as President of the Council and once as President of the Assembly. He made a practice of bringing with him to Geneva the chief officials of his Foreign Office on the grounds that he could do his official work more effectively there than at Prague. This became increasingly true as the prestige of the League grew and it became more and more the fashion for Foreign Ministers and other great, wise and eminent personages to represent their countries at the Geneva meetings. It was one of the advantages of this practice that questions which might have been the subject of endless interchanges of diplomatic despatches and memoranda could be settled by a few minutes conversation round a table in a Swiss Hotel.

Nevertheless, it was a common criticism that the League proceedings were dilatory. No doubt where issues were complicated and important, adequate and sometimes considerable time was taken in reaching the necessary decisions. Moreover, after 1930, when the Western Great Powers began

their policy of slighting or ignoring the machinery of the League, the results were necessarily disappointing. But even so an immense mass of work was done on questions of less combative importance and during the best period of its activity, the achievements registered at Geneva set a fresh standard of efficiency and despatch in the settlement of international questions, as every one knows who has looked impartially into the records.

But it would not be right to say that Dr. Beneš valued the League chiefly as an assistance to ordinary routine diplomacy. From the outset he recognized that on its success or failure depended the future of his country and, indeed, of the world. As soon as the Republic of Czechoslovakia was organized and had been recognized as an independent sovereign State, Dr. Beneš, with the full support of President Masaryk, did everything he could to support and strengthen its international position. Situated in the middle of Europe, between two great Empires, his country was in a position of obvious danger if peace were disturbed. To minimize this peril the Czechoslovak Government entered into understandings with France, Russia and the Little Entente. But Dr. Beneš always looked to the League as the chief guarantee of European Peace. Clearly Czechoslovakia could not hope for safety in isolation. Nor was security to be obtained by membership of one or other of hostile European groups. Even the alliance with France was more due to French initiative than that of Dr. Beneš. I remember he once explained to me the attitude of his country on the eve of one of the post-war conferences, I think at Genoa. He told me that if England and France had a common policy he would gladly support it but if they differed, Czechoslovakia must withdraw. It was impossible for her to support either country against the other. That was the principle which guided his foreign policy. He wanted European peace. Only so could his country be safe and the whole continent prosperous. But he had no desire to become

a member of an old-fashioned alliance formed to resist a rival group.

For such a policy, wise and in the best sense progressive, the League was an excellent system. It existed to establish international peace and security by preventing aggression, by providing for the peaceful settlement of international disputes and by promoting international co-operation. If that could have been done, the main objects of the foreign policy of President Masaryk and Dr. Beneš would have been achieved. For the welfare and advancement of the League, Dr. Beneš was, therefore, a convinced advocate.

I had the great honour of collaborating with him on many occasions. Indeed, he and Dr. Nansen were my two chief League friends. Both of them had a very special position at Geneva, though not quite the same. Nansen had great courage, pellucid honesty and, owing to the geographical position of his country, considerable freedom of action. He was not a great orator nor even an outstanding negotiator. But he was a true friend of peace and he hated oppression. Dr. Beneš was quite as steadfast and courageous. Nor was he in the ordinary sense an orator. But he was what is far more useful, a most convincing speaker. In the Assembly he did not speak very often. But when he did his speech always made a difference. If there were difficulties, they became less; if the issues were confused, they became clearer and the real point of the discussion was illuminated. In Committee he was simply unequalled. His intellectual resource was amazing. Continually he was able to show irritable disputants that the difference between them was not insurmountable. No doubt the success of his intervention was partly due to his mental characteristics. But it also resulted from his wholehearted conviction that the success of the League was necessary for peace and that therefore it behoved all men of goodwill to sink lesser differences in its support.

The first step taken by the Czech statesmen in the direction

of what was afterwards called 'pooled security' was the establishment of the Little Entente. It was in substance a defensive alliance between Rumania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia against the possibility of Hungarian invasion at first, extended later to other potential aggressors. It was in no sense hostile to the League. Indeed, Dr. Beneš desired it to be interwoven into the League system. He even proposed that it should be openly recognized and approved by the League. Probably that would have been a good thing and might have brought about an extended arrangement to include Hungary, Austria and Poland. But official opinion was against it, partly no doubt because the governments of England and France were opposed to any additional diplomatic provision for the resistance to aggression by force. There was also another diplomatic tendency which did great harm. It was thought, rightly enough, that the chief ultimate danger to peace was from Germany. Indeed, apart from Russia, which showed no signs of being aggressively inclined, Germany was the only continental country which had the will to start a new World War as soon as it should have the power to do so. The great object of the Western Powers, who were for peace at almost any price, was to keep Germany quiet. Appeasement, long before it had been given that name, became the motive of their international policy. It may have been partly for this reason that the Little Entente was regarded with suspicion in Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay, just as happened to the League itself later on. The Germany that distrusted Stresemann and caused Erzberger and Rathenau to be murdered disliked any institution that strengthened peace. She never accepted her defeat in 1918 and those who directed her were determined to reverse it, not only by restoring to her what she had lost but by seizing for her such a dominant position in the world that she could never be ousted from it. To 'appease' such a power was not only a hopeless undertaking but it involved repeated sacrifice of countries really friendly to peace

in order to gratify one which was determined on war. There is no more futile or disreputable political device than to abandon your friends in order to placate your enemies. Yet it is often adopted, usually with disastrous results.

Meanwhile the League continued to advance in power and authority and people like Dr. Beneš were confirmed in their belief that it might be made into an effective instrument for the abolition of war. It is impossible within the limits of this paper to describe all his activities in this direction for that would be to write a complete history of the League. I can only touch on a few points, and first of all I must leave on one side all the activities of the League in non-contentious matters —important as they were. I believe that the work done, often in co-operation with the International Labour Office, in social, economic and humanitarian matters was of great value to the world. Much more might have been achieved if the members of the League had chosen to make more use of this great international instrument. Unhappily, it often happened that recommendations agreed to at Geneva were disregarded by the Governments at home. It is also true that the considerable success of the League system in non-contentious matters had very little influence in preserving peace. All the advantages of international co-operation were ruthlessly cast aside by the Axis Powers when they determined on war.

Let me then come to one or two matters of grave political importance in which Dr. Beneš was personally concerned.

First of all there was the question of international disarmament. By Article 8 of the Covenant it was declared " that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations." The Article goes on to direct the Council to " formulate plans for such a reduction for the consideration and action of the several Governments "; and adds a warning against the dangers of manufacture by private enterprise

of the weapons of war. The League began very early to consider this question. Almost from the start it became customary for each annual Assembly to appoint a special Committee—(the Third)—to deal with armaments and on this Committee Dr. Beneš frequently sat. There was also another Committee consisting partly of experts which drafted a convention called the Treaty of Mutual Assistance, by which a precise guarantee of protection was to be given to those states which should carry out their part of a general scheme of international disarmament. Dr. Beneš was rapporteur to the Assembly for this scheme which was finally defeated partly by the attitude of the British Labour Party. Then followed the well known Protocol of Geneva, which constituted a complete plan for international Arbitration, Disarmament and Security. For this project Dr. Beneš and Monsieur Politis, the Greek Statesman, were joint rapporteurs. But it was also wrecked by the British Government, this time Conservative, instigated by reactionary influences. However, Dr. Beneš was not discouraged and by the strenuous efforts of himself and others, including the Second Labour Government of this country, a general Disarmament Conference met at Geneva in 1932. I had very much hoped that Dr. Beneš would have been the President of the Conference and I had some grounds for believing that, if that position had been offered to him, he would have accepted it. Owing, however, to the complexities of politics here, Mr. Henderson, who was Foreign Secretary when the scheme was adopted in 1930, was made President. I do not wish to say a word in criticism of Mr. Henderson, who worked most devotedly for the success of the Conference, in spite of serious illness, but there can be no doubt that Dr. Beneš possessed certain advantages which could not belong to Mr. Henderson. Whether even Dr. Beneš could have brought the Conference to success is certainly doubtful. But his long familiarity with every aspect of the subject, coupled with his very remarkable gifts of conciliation, would have given the Conference the best

possible chance of achieving agreement. The fact that his appointment was strenuously opposed by the Germans shows how valuable it would have been.

Advocacy of international disarmament was only one of Dr. Beneš's many activities at Geneva. Indeed, there was no effort made there on behalf of peace and progress in which he did not assist. Among others he was a warm supporter of Briand's scheme for a European Chamber of the League, which should examine purely European questions, especially dealing with economics and social reform. No doubt there were difficulties about the plan, urged strongly, if I remember aright, by the Swiss delegation on the ground that it would break up the unity of the League and, in fact, it failed to survive. It has recently been revived in a rather different form by Sir Walter Layton and perhaps something in that direction may ultimately be accepted. Dr. Beneš hoped that it might create a 'new moral unit' and no doubt one of the defects of the League was that it did not fully achieve that kind of corporate entity which constitutes the great force of patriotism.

I have not space to describe the admirable work for peace and justice done by Dr. Beneš in the Corfu and Manchurian questions. On the first, his intervention greatly assisted what was, in fact, a considerable success for the League. On the second, in spite of all his efforts, aggression triumphed, with disastrous results.

In addition to these larger efforts, a number of proposals were brought forward to strengthen the machinery of the League for preventing war or assisting countries which should be the victims of aggression. Czechoslovakia was sure to be found as a supporter of such proposals and they received usually sympathetic treatment by the Assembly. But by general consent they were made dependent on the adoption of a scheme of international disarmament, on the ground that, so long as colossal preparations for war continued to be made,

mere diplomatic safeguards would be insufficient to prevent it.

Similarly, many steps were taken to relieve members of the League—like Greece and Austria and Hungary—of intolerable financial strain in the hope that economic stability would bring about political moderation, which, but for the efforts of the Axis Powers, might actually have happened. It is, however, right to say that there is very little support in history for the view that the hideous monster of war can be checked by social or economic reform. The most that can be hoped from improvements of that kind is that they may act as an additional inducement to maintain in full efficiency the direct peace-keeping authority.

For the same reason it may be doubted whether the policy of international protection for racial and religious minorities is of great utility for peace, though its object may be on other grounds very desirable. The attitude of Dr. Beneš on this question was unassailable. He admitted, of course, that such minorities were entitled to just and sympathetic treatment. He pointed out that in his country that had always been the policy of the Government, and he urged that, if it were thought necessary to increase the stringency of international rules on the subject, they ought to be made equally applicable to all nations alike.

In other words, the attitude of the President of Czechoslovakia has been the same in Minority Questions as it has been in regard to other international relations. He has unswervingly maintained that nations must base their conduct to one another on the principles of Freedom, Justice and Good Faith. That must be the foundation on which all plans for the maintenance of international peace and the growth of international prosperity should be built. In his broadcast speech of April 8th, Mr. Cordell Hull, while sketching in admirable language the general lines of an international policy, insisted that such a policy was essentially incompatible with Fascism. For Fascism despises Freedom, perverts Justice and

ignores Good Faith. According to its corrupt doctrine, no moral rules bind the State. Its only principle should be to pursue national wealth and power in the narrowest meaning of those words and to use any tyranny, oppression and falsehood that its rulers may approve for that purpose. It is obvious that such a policy can only lead to desolating war and until it is abandoned genuinely and completely no reliance can be placed on its present professors. First, then, any international authority that is set up must be constructed according to these fundamental principles. When that has been done, its machinery may be utilized not only to prevent fighting but to promote friendship. It is a short step from recognition that international peace must rest on international morality to perception that international friendship will grow from a righteous peace. That I believe to be the centre and core of Dr. Beneš's international creed. There is nothing startling in it. To some it will seem almost a truism. Certainly the overwhelming majority of the civilized people of the world would accept it. What is wanted is suitable international machinery to carry out the people's wishes. In that sense it is abundantly true that public opinion is and must be the life-blood of any effective organization for peace. The phrase has sometimes been perverted as though it meant that opinion is enough and need not be followed by action. That is as absurd as to say that national education can take the place of the criminal law. No doubt it is true that if all citizens were properly educated and always acted accordingly, the magistrate would have little to do. So it is with nations. If all could be trusted never to use violence to attain their desires, armaments would be unnecessary. Till that happens, the use of international force is essential so that national security may be guaranteed to all those nations which desire to live their own lives in peace and prosperity with due regard to the peace and prosperity of others.

All this was well understood at Geneva by those states

which, like Czechoslovakia, sincerely desired above all things the peace of the world. Nor was there anything in the Covenant of the League of Nations which conflicted with these ideas. On the contrary, any intelligent reader of its articles will agree that such was the very spirit of the League. Why, then, did it fail to maintain peace? The answer is plain enough. Peace was not maintained because some of the members of the League who had the most power were unwilling to use that power to prevent or suppress aggression. In theory all were agreed that an aggressor was a public enemy and must be put down. But in practice all were not prepared to take the necessary action if it involved the use of military force. Many argued that the object of the League was to maintain peace and that could never be done by threatening war. To do that was, as was often said, to use Beelzebub to cast out devils. That might be a legitimate argument in the mouth of those who had persuaded themselves that the use of force always and in all cases was morally wrong. But the statesmen who prevented the coercion of Italy at the time of her attack on Ethiopia had no such belief. They knew quite well that in every community there are some people who are so lawless that, unless they are forcibly restrained, no one else can be free and that that is as true with nations as it is with individuals. It is no doubt deplorable that such people will not yield to persuasion or remonstrance. But so it is; and therefore, in spite of the seeming paradox, force must in the last resort be used by those who desire peace or otherwise it will certainly be used by those who desire war. The only qualification to this proposition is that the force for peace should be so overwhelmingly strong that the warmonger will be speedily and decisively overcome.

That is, if I may be allowed to say so, the Beneš case for a peace keeping international authority. The argument is unanswerable. But that is not enough. Men are not moved solely or even chiefly by reason in matters of this kind.

Patriotism is not the result of a careful balance of the advantages and disadvantages of the existence of one's fatherland. It is the result of one of the most powerful emotions of human nature, the *esprit de corps* of the French, the feeling which induces a man to merge himself in the community to which he belongs. We have watched with intense admiration the heroism of the men, women and children of the occupied countries enduring nameless tortures and sacrificing their lives and all that they value rather than assist the invader of their country. If only a fraction of this self-sacrifice had been available for the prevention of aggression at its inception, these sufferings need never have been endured. That seems to me the great international problem of the future. I do not doubt that an international organization to keep the peace will come into being. As far as we can see, it is likely to embody the main features of the League of Nations. True, various modifications have been suggested and no doubt they will all be carefully examined and improvements in machinery may be made. But in the end, the broad principle laid down in the Four Power Declaration at Moscow will be found to embody the greatest common measure of agreement at present attainable, namely, " a general international organization to maintain peace, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States." That is the central conception of the League of Nations for which we contended at Geneva. The machinery needed to carry it out is important, but less vital. Moreover, such international bodies as have recently been set up follow pretty closely the League pattern. But the essential problem remains. How can such an organization be given the power and authority necessary for its successful operation. This is not a question of drafting articles of agreement. It was not any defect of that kind that was the trouble. All good observers know—none better than Dr. Beneš —that the Covenant of the League conferred upon it ample powers to have stopped German aggression if the members of

the League, and particularly the more powerful members, had been willing to use them. That was where the break came and that is what all who value peace must remedy in the future.

The plain truth is that there was too little League spirit at Geneva. The members of the League attended the Assembly and the Council. Their representatives sat on the Committees and worked on proposals submitted to them. Speaking generally, the discussions were able and interesting. But in the great majority of cases, each speaker was the mouthpiece of his Government and regarded its interests far more than those of the League community. In non-contentious questions, where the obvious interests of all states were substantially identical, that did not matter. But when it came to questions of peace and war, the weakness became clear. When, for instance, Italy attacked Abyssinia, it was common to hear national statesmen—both in France and England—declare that after all the interests of the Western Powers would not be affected if Abyssinian territory were transferred to Italy and that they were not prepared to risk any part of the national forces in preventing it. In other words, such people were prepared to use the League machinery to defend their own national interests but for nothing else. No doubt where the disturbers of peace could be coerced without any serious danger of war, then it was recognized that some action for peace might be desirable. But even so, we were warned that such action would have to be carefully limited to what was quite safe. Obviously, policy of this kind meant that those responsible had no real belief in the possibility or desirability of a world system. They still thought in terms of old-fashioned national interests and did not realize the vast strides in the direction of national interdependence made by the shrinkage of distance and other causes in recent years. They admitted no duty to the community of the League as such. They did not even perceive that, if aggression was to be

eliminated, there could be no picking and choosing. It was out of the question for this or that Great Power to decline to interfere when the victim of invasion was small and distant and to expect other powers to act in their defence when the aggressor was a powerful neighbour.

All this means that there was little League *esprit de corps*. True, there had been some signs of it. Dr. Beneš will remember several occasions when the Assembly rose to appeals to interfere to stop some serious injustice or to go to the assistance of some country in grave difficulties. But, speaking generally, League feeling, even at Geneva, was feeble and intermittent. And that was even more true in the national public opinion of the League members. Has the war made a change in that matter? It seems doubtful. There is indeed a very powerful feeling of hatred of war and of those who brought it about. That is good so far. But unless even that feeling is guided into the proper channel, it may simply lead to pacifism and isolationism. What is wanted is a more constructive acceptance of general responsibility for the maintenance of peace everywhere. The best thing would be if a strong sense of duty owed to the League as a whole could be developed, if the men should feel the outbreak of war as a personal disgrace. We are, I fear, some way off any such general sentiment. But could we not each of us foster at home a national desire that our country should play a vigorous part in the work of peace-keeping throughout the world? Am I wrong in thinking that such a desire did exist in Czechoslovakia before the war? Certainly the attitude of her representatives at Geneva gave that impression. May I not say that even in the case of my own country, some of the British representatives did care for peace for its own sake and did believe sometimes that there could be no more splendid task for a statesman than to contribute effectively to the success of a peace-keeping organization animated by the spirit of a Masaryk or a Beneš?

Perhaps, then, that may be the way out. Could we not

harness the mighty force of national patriotism to the cause of World Peace? Peace, it is said, hath her victories no less renowned than war, but they do not excite the same national enthusiasm. That is natural enough. There is nothing heroic or romantic about work for Peace. But if the great object of a statesman should be the promotion of the well-being of his fellow men spiritually and materially, there can be no doubt that it will be secured far more effectively by the establishment of a just and lasting peace than by any political or military triumph, however glorious.

RICHARD LAW

Czechoslovak-British Relations

If one considers, carefully and dispassionately, the development of relations between Great Britain and the Czechoslovak Republic, one may reasonably describe the process as healthy. Obviously, a graph tracing the development would not be an unwavering straight line near the top of the chart indicating unvaried identity of views; nor would it show constant and complete divergence of sympathy and interests. It would, in fact, be a line rising here and falling there, but in general climbing steadily towards the level of mutual respect and genuine friendship. This progress, though slow, is solidly based and essentially sound and there are good grounds for hoping that on such a foundation the existing friendship will deepen and endure. To that end, no man has done more than Dr. Eduard Beneš, for seventeen years Foreign Minister, and thereafter President, of the Czechoslovak Republic. In these capacities, Dr. Beneš has had the main part, on his own country's side, in all official British-Czechoslovak relations from 1918 to the present day. For his sense of balance, far-sightedness and understanding, both countries have good reason to be thankful.

Formal British-Czechoslovak relations began with the British Declaration handed to Dr. Beneš on August 9th, 1918, by which Great Britain recognized the Czechoslovaks as an Allied nation and the Czechoslovak National Council as the supreme organ of Czechoslovak national interests and trustee of the future Czechoslovak Government. Together with the British-Czechoslovak Agreement which followed it less than a month later, this declaration considerably facilitated subsequent negotiations undertaken by Dr. Beneš with other Allied Powers

and paved the way for Czechoslovakia's entry to the inter-Allied conferences and, most important, for her participation in the Peace Conference. Dr. Beneš himself has described the negotiations which led to the declaration as the most important political activity of the National Council during the war.

Of the Peace Conference proceedings themselves it is unnecessary to speak here beyond pointing out that here again Czechoslovakia's interests rested largely in the capable hands of Dr. Beneš, by then officially Foreign Minister.

It would be idle to suggest that Great Britain, at the close of the last war, regarded the newly created Republic of Czechoslovakia as a perfectly situated, ideally founded State which was bound to settle smoothly into the disturbed pattern of Central Europe, bringing with it peace and harmony for all time. But we wished it good fortune with all sincerity. We hoped it would prosper both its own people and the rest of Central Europe and we were glad to give it our assistance to that end but our attitude was governed by the desire to witness, before reaching any final judgment, how it would work out in practice. Czechoslovaks, for their part, regarded Britain as more remote from themselves than France, as non-Continental, not easily understandable, even, perhaps, frigid. In the first stage, therefore, the relationship may be described as one of rather formal goodwill.

There were, of course, other obstacles to real intimacy between the two countries. Both Great Britain and Czechoslovakia entered the post-war era with a firm desire to maintain peace and the genuine intention to fulfil loyally the obligations they had undertaken in the signing of the peace treaties. While they had these principles in common, however, there was an obvious difference in the position, and therefore in the approach to European problems, of the two countries. Great Britain was a long-established world power with an overseas empire; geographically, she stood on Europe's threshold and, therefore, some concluded, also politically, with the implication

that she need not inevitably be embroiled in the troubles of the Continent. Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, was a young state, dangerously shaped strategically, ethnographically complex, and situated in the very cockpit of European disturbance. For her, the maintenance of the peace treaties was admittedly of vital importance while there was a tendency in this country at that time to believe that Great Britain could approach European affairs from a neutral, objective angle. From the point of view of Czechoslovak foreign policy, one recognizes that this British attitude of aloofness, as it must have appeared, was disappointing. Nevertheless Dr. Beneš continued to pursue a realistic policy based on the practical possibilities as they existed, and did not lose his high regard for the fundamental soundness of British statesmanship, institutions and character.

It is, indeed a tribute to the patience and understanding of this remarkable man that he recognized that Great Britain's interest in his country was both genuinely benevolent and disinterested. France's relations with Czechoslovakia were much more positive, much closer than our own, but it is no detraction from the great services she rendered to the Republic to acknowledge that there were very clear and solid reasons why she should co-operate closely with Czechoslovakia. Politically, her position *vis-à-vis* Germany was very similar to that of the new Republic and on the economic side the latter was potentially a very useful customer. Great Britain, on the other hand, as she saw European affairs in the early twenties, had no important subjective reasons for selecting Czechoslovakia as a particular object of her attention. The British interest was, in the main, that Czechoslovakia should continue her sober and intelligent foreign policy and maintain her high standard of order and decency in her internal affairs; moreover, Czechoslovakia, as a manufacturing country, was even a possible commercial competitor. Dr. Beneš, anxious though he was, then and always, to establish the closest and friendliest

possible relations with this country, yet recognized and took into account this viewpoint.

It was against this background that the various contacts, political, commercial, financial and personal, between Czechoslovaks and British, began to weave themselves into a substantial durable fabric. British visitors, private individuals, Members of Parliament and representatives of commercial undertakings, travelled to Prague in a steadily increasing flow. Almost all were favourably impressed, realizing that here was a country of solid foundations and that its inhabitants were civilized, industrious, business-like people with fundamentally sound ideas. By 1923 it was generally held in British circles that, of all the new States, Czechoslovakia had attained the greatest stability and displayed the highest degree of political wisdom. At the same time, the Czechoslovaks began to appreciate more and more the British way of life, the British point of view and British business methods. It was during this period that the £6 million Czechoslovak loan was raised in the London market and the Anglo-Czechoslovak Bank created and when President Masaryk, accompanied by Dr. Beneš, paid an official visit to England in 1923 the British people demonstrated unmistakably the esteem in which they held him and his country.

During 1924 and 1925 this steady and altogether favourable development of relations was perceptibly slowed down. After Locarno, however, Czechoslovak-British friendship progressed and deepened. In the following years more British buyers than ever before visited the Republic; the Sokol Festival of 1926 drew many British enthusiasts, including an official delegation from the City of London; and strong, informal links were forged in many ways on private initiative. In the field of foreign policy the Czechoslovak people showed a greater willingness to understand and acknowledge that Great Britain's fundamental aim in European affairs was, simply, peace, and that in essence Britain and Czechoslovakia were striving for

the same goal. Dr. Beneš .himself confirmed this on the occasion of his official visit to England in 1928 when he said he realized the importance of Great Britain's efforts to bring about better relations between France and Germany and affirmed that the policy of removing causes of friction between former adversaries accorded strictly with his own purpose of achieving stabilization in Central Europe.

The gradually maturing friendship had, by this time, grown sufficiently sturdy to withstand the tests which presented themselves with the advent of the world economic crisis. Great Britain experienced the effects of the depression before Czechoslovakia and in the commercial sphere the measures which His Majesty's Government were reluctantly forced to take were seriously felt in Czechoslovakia. In particular, the reduction of the import duty on raw sugar in 1928, calculated to stimulate refining in this country, adversely affected the important Czechoslovak sugar export business; similarly, our abandonment of the gold standard in 1931 also had unfavourable consequences for Czechoslovak trade. Each of these steps produced, initially, consternation and resentment against Great Britain. These feelings were, however, superficial and temporary and had relatively small effect on the basic cordiality with which Great Britain was generally regarded. Thanks in large measure to the wise council of M. Jan Masaryk, then Czechoslovak Minister in London, Czechoslovak business interests were quick to recognize the grounds for such measures and to realize that the prosperity of Great Britain and her Empire was of considerable importance to them and to the world. In the same way, divergences of opinion arising out of the reparation conference at The Hague in 1930 were insufficient to upset seriously the development of fundamental goodwill between Czechoslovakia and Great Britain; the Czechoslovak people and press continued to express their high esteem for British institutions and for the high standard of integrity in British public and commercial life.

Sterner tests, however, were to follow. Possibly the biggest setback to Czechoslovakia's hopes in this period was the unsuccessful outcome of the World Economic Conference. Even Dr. Beneš began to fear that Great Britain's eyes were turning overseas and away from Europe. In a speech delivered in April 1933, he expressed the opinion that this country had, to all intents and purposes, withdrawn from the Continent of Europe and decided to concentrate on imperial problems, that she was no longer willing to enter into any commitments in Europe and had reverted to her traditional policy of caution and reserve and to the role of mediator in Franco-Italian and Franco-German disputes. In this view, mistaken as it has happily proved to be, Dr. Beneš was undoubtedly reflecting the opinion of the vast majority of his countrymen who set such immense store on sincere Franco-British collaboration and direct British participation in European affairs. Even so, they were quick to seize upon any indication of a change in British policy as a heartening sign. Their despondency was partly dissipated during the following year by Britain's increased activity at Geneva. Dr. Beneš had never ceased to devote every effort in the international sphere towards strengthening the League and enhancing its importance. Accordingly he warmly welcomed any indication that the theoretical belief in the League might be giving place to active efforts. By this time Dr. Beneš was already acutely alive to the German danger.

The question of what Germany desired to do, and, even more important, her capacity and ability to carry out her plans, was already the fundamental preoccupation of Czechoslovak foreign policy. The reoccupation of the Rhineland came as a profound shock and an ominous portent. The British reaction then and at the time of Germany's denunciation of the International Waterways Agreement afforded a degree of reassurance and there was, at this stage, an increasing tendency to pin hopes on Great Britain as the strongest

potential bulwark against Germany's aggressive intentions.

An even clearer danger signal to the Czechoslovaks during 1936 was the obtrusion into the international sphere of what came to be known as the Sudeten-German problem. It would be superfluous, untimely and ill-judged to recall, at this stage, the detailed development of this unhappy episode. British public opinion first became aware, though not fully, of the importance of the Sudeten question in 1937. British visitors went to Prague and to the frontier areas of the Republic with the intention of seeing for themselves what was at issue. But the problem, sufficiently involved in itself, was still further complicated of deliberate purpose by the Germans. Events moved fast and alarmingly and under the ever weightier pressure of these events, His Majesty's Government found itself obliged to play an increasingly prominent part in the efforts to prevent war. The culmination was the tragedy of Munich and the low-water mark of British-Czechoslovak relations.

For the mass of the British people, Munich and the German occupation of Bohemia-Moravia marked the end of a well-meaning belief that the European States and peoples had developed beyond the stage of international warfare. There was born, at the same time, a feeling of remorse and profound sympathy and admiration for the Czechoslovak nation whose sacrifice turned out, in the event, to be in a lost cause. The efforts to relieve the national and personal suffering that ensued from Munich must be accounted of small value save as a symbol of those feelings. But of the sincerity of our sentiments, those Czechoslovaks who have shared with us on these shores the trials of battle can be in no doubt.

Much has been done therefore to heal the cleavage brought about by Munich, and the final step was taken in the exchange of notes on August 5th, 1942 under the terms of which the British Government declared that they regarded themselves as free from any engagements in respect of Czechoslovakia made

with Germany in 1938 and that at the final settlement of the Czechoslovak frontiers to be reached at the end of the war they would not be influenced by any changes effected in and since 1938. Czechoslovakia is now our ally against Germany; British ships brought Czechoslovakia's fighting men to these shores after the tragic fall of France; Czechoslovak airmen are flying in British machines beside their British comrades; there are Czechoslovak workers in our factories and workshops. President Beneš's Government is established on British soil and Czechoslovakia is a trusted and respected ally in the war against Germany. Most important, perhaps, ordinary Czechoslovak and British people have had the opportunity of seeing one another at close quarters, of getting beneath the crust of formal relationship and knowing one another as people with much in common. There is a great heritage of historical and cultural ties between us. Mistakes have been made but our friendship has survived the severest tests and to-day is firmer than ever before. In this knowledge we may look forward with confidence and optimism.

PROF. SIR ERNEST BARKER

British and Czech Democracy

COMPARISONS are always odious. Any comparison of British and Czech democracy which is made by a British writer who has never lived in Czechoslovakia and does not know its language (knowledge of a country's language is always an essential condition of any true understanding of its life and institutions), is bound to be sadly defective. But the writer knew President Masaryk: he has been a friend of his son for over twenty years: he has met and talked with President Beneš; and at any rate he has sympathy even if he has not knowledge. Defective as the comparison which is here attempted may be, it may also be of some service if it is honestly and faithfully made.

One essential feature of British parliamentary democracy is its antiquity. Democracy was stirring in Britain over three hundred years ago; it grew in the civil wars of the middle of the seventeenth century; it established and enunciated some of its basic principles in the Bill of Rights in 1689; it began to develop a system of parties in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and it gradually developed a cabinet system during the course of the eighteenth. In a sense, it is true, the British system was for long an aristocracy, rather than a democracy: the great landed magnates were in general control of parliament; and the electorate was only a fraction of the whole of the population. But the principles and institutions developed during the period of aristocracy—the principle and practice of the 'rights of the subject,' the system of party, and the cabinet system—were all foundations for a democracy; and they could all be adopted and improved when the electorate was enlarged and the sovereignty of a freely elected House

of Commons was enthroned on the basis of a broad and liberal suffrage. The enlargement of the electorate and the broadening of the suffrage were begun by the Reform Bill of 1832; and they were gradually carried further by successive acts of reform until, a century later, nearly three persons in every four were entitled to exercise the vote.

The Czechs have an old democratic tradition which goes back to the Hussite wars, five hundred years ago. But the process and the vicissitudes of history deprived them of democratic experience—deprived them, indeed, of *any* form of political experience—for hundreds and hundreds of years. It was not until after the *Ausgleich* of 1867 that the Czechs were able to acquire a direct experience of politics; and even then the experience which they acquired was an experience which was gained within the terms and under the limits of an Austro-Hungarian Empire which (not to speak of the Hungarian Diet across the Leitha) included both Poles and Austrians, as well as Czechs, in the composite *Reichsrath* of Vienna. Not till the year 1919 were the Czechs free to begin democratic experience in an independent State of their own kith and kin; and not till the year 1920 did they establish their own constitution. The experience which Britain had distributed over a period of three centuries had almost to be packed in a single year; and Czechoslovakia had suddenly to spring into life, fully armed and adult, as the ancient Greeks used to fable that the goddess Athena sprang from the head of her father Zeus.

This difference between British antiquity and Czechoslovak modernity is connected with another difference. The British constitution, being an historic growth, is an unwritten constitution, and British democracy has the characteristics which go with an unwritten constitution. It is a matter of conventions, understandings and tact: it depends on a set of ideas, a trend of opinion, and (as the philosophers call it) a 'general will,' which has never been precisely formulated and cannot be found in documents. The constitution of Czechoslovakia

which was formulated in 1920 is a written constitution. It is a precise and exact document, expressed in black and white. Writers have often disputed about the comparative merits of the written and the unwritten constitution. We need not enter into the dispute. It is sufficient here to say that an unwritten constitution, such as the British, reflects and mirrors the national past, and only the national past. An unwritten constitution, formulated at a point of time in a general European convulsion, will have a different character. It may tend to be eclectic, picking this element from the United States, and that from the French Republic; it may tend to be up-to-date and to include the latest modern novelties—a constitutional court, or a council for economic affairs, or an exact and mathematical system of proportional representation. There is a large degree of merit in a constitution which is modern and which corresponds to the latest developments of modern life. But an Englishman might say that he likes to wear an old coat, a little shabby but very comfortable; and he might reflect that a new suit is apt to make him uncomfortable. He is an essential pragmatist, or rather an experimentalist; and his faith may be expressed in two Latin words—the word *interim* ('something to be going on with'), and the word *pedetemptim* ('feeling your way forward step by step'). Anyhow here is a difference for which neither of our two peoples are responsible, but which is simply due to the different processes and the different vicissitudes of our national histories.

Another difference, less fundamental, but still important, has also flowed from the difference of the historical process. The long continuity of that process in Britain has left an element of aristocracy still surviving in British democracy. Its second chamber, or House of Lords, is based on the principle of heredity; and while many of its members are newly, or recently, recruited, there are also some belonging to families which have been continuously represented in the chamber since the sixteenth century—and even from the middle ages.

The younger sons of these families—and sometimes the eldest son until he succeeds his father and enters the second chamber —are elected by constituencies to sit in the first chamber or House of Commons; and when the Conservative party, or a coalition of parties, is in power, there are also likely to be members of the old families sitting in the cabinet. The present war Cabinet, for example (based on a coalition of parties), contains three members — out of a total of eight— belonging to families which were already conspicuous in politics in the eighteenth century. Mr. Churchill is one: Mr. Eden is another: Mr. Lyttleton is the third. The Czech second chamber, under the constitution of 1920, is a Senate elected, by universal and equal suffrage, in the same way as the chamber of deputies—the only difference between the two chambers being that a senator has a longer term than a deputy and must be of a maturer age in order to be eligible. Nor is this all. By one of the tragic misfortunes of history the native Czech aristocracy was largely eliminated by the catastrophe of the Thirty Years War; and the aristocratic tradition—whether for weal or woe—is therefore sparse in the social composition of Czechoslovakia. Opinions may well differ about the value of an aristocratic element in the constitution and the operation of a modern democracy. Advanced and radical thinkers will argue that such an element is a survival and an encouragement of inequality, and even servility, and a heavy and dangerous brake on progress. More moderate thinkers will contend that aristocracy, in spite of the selfishness and the class-interest which it has shown in the past (and these defects were conspicuous in the British aristocracy of the eighteenth century), has also shown some compensating merits. It has encouraged, among its better members, a tradition of public service based more on the idea of family honour and family obligation than on calculations of personal prestige or personal advancement. In the age of plutocracy and of the 'pull' of business interests, the idea of family

honour has its value; and an aristocratic tradition, if it serves no other purpose, may at any rate serve to diminish the danger of the ascendency of economic motives with which modern democracy is confronted.

British democracy is not only allied with aristocracy: it is also connected, and closely connected, with monarchy. There was a time in the middle of the seventeenth century when the beginnings of British parliamentary democracy were involved in a life-and-death struggle with monarchy. Charles I was brought to the block by his people, and for eleven years, from 1649 to 1660, Britain was a republic. The monarchy was restored by the Restoration of 1660; but it was only in the lifetime of some of us who are still living that it firmly endeared itself to the general heart of the people. That union has now been cemented; and monarchy and democracy are now wedded together in the British mind. The head of the State stands beyond contention, party, or challenge; and the ministers of the Cabinet, being also (in the form and theory of the constitution) the ministers of the Crown, are vested with an added dignity and clothed with an additional prestige. This is a fruit of British history rather than an act of British choice. The British can claim no merit for the fruit which has fallen into their lap—unless it be that they have been sensible enough to let it fall! They would be the last to advocate, or to encourage, the adoption of a system of monarchy in other countries. Republicanism has a clarity and a logic of its own; and it has a shining historical example in the great Republic of the U.S.A. There is a difference between republican democracy and what may be called monarchical democracy. But there is room enough for both; and a republican democracy may be strengthened and ennobled by the undying fame and influence of a Washington or a Masaryk, as much as a monarchical democracy can be strengthened and cemented by its anthem of "God Save the King."

There is one feature of British democracy which has im-

pressed itself more and more upon the mind of the writer as he has grown older and older. This is, if the term may be used, its double character. There are two democracies in Britain. There is the democracy of voluntary society, which expresses itself in Trade Unions and their Trade Union Congress, as it also expresses itself (and has expressed itself for centuries past) in a multitude of other voluntary associations—free universities, free churches, free charitable associations and free voluntary bodies of every kind. There is also—standing by the side of the democracy of voluntary society and co-operating with it in a happy alliance—the democracy of the organized legal state. A British philosopher, John Stuart Mill, remarked in his *Autobiography* seventy years ago, that in Britain "nine-tenths of the internal business which elsewhere devolves on the government is transacted by agencies independent of it." The British have altered that proportion in the last seventy years: they have turned more to the government, as the government has become more democratic and society has grown more complicated and more in need of legal regulation. But they still believe deeply in the voluntary principle, and they still act largely in its strength. They demand the two democracies; and during the present war the conduct of the national war-effort has been an activity of both—a partnership of the government and its officials with associations of workers and associations of employers. The knowledge of the writer does not entitle him to draw any adequate comparison between Czech and British democracy on this fundamental ground. He knows something of the strength of the Sokols and of the contribution which they have made to national life and regeneration; but he knows little more. He can only hope that Czech scholars and students of politics—who know vastly more of their own country than he does, and who know (in his experience) far more of his own country than he does of theirs—will pursue a comparison on this ground. It is, as has just been suggested, a fundamental

ground—perhaps the most fundamental of all. Political democracy is safe and sure when it is buttressed by the democracy of voluntary society and when it acts in alliance and co-operation with that democracy.

There is a sense in which British democracy and Czech democracy may both be called multinational. The democracy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a democracy which includes the English, the Scotch, the Welsh and the people of Northern Ireland. The democracy of Czechoslovakia (as Czechoslovakia stood in the twenty years of its remarkable progress between the end of 1918 and the end of 1938) is a democracy including not only Czechs and Slovaks, and not only the Ruthenians of its eastern territory, but also Germans and Magyars. A multinational democracy is vexed by what may be called (the phrase is loose, but may perhaps be pardoned) a federal problem. That problem has vexed the history of British democracy. It assumed an acute form in the Irish question, which was settled, in its main lines (though it is not yet entirely settled), when the greater part of Ireland became an autonomous Dominion under the name of Eire. It now assumes a less acute form in the claims which are advanced by nationalist bodies of opinion—not perhaps of any great strength of numbers, but of deep and ardent convictions—in Scotland and in Wales. This federal problem has also vexed Czechoslovak democracy; and it is a problem which, in the future, both Czechoslovakia and British democracy have to bear in mind and to solve. The problem is alike, and yet different, in the two democracies. In the British case there is an island frontier, and there has been a long tradition of political union: Wales and England were united as long ago as 1536, and Scotland and England as long ago as 1707. In the Czechoslovak case there are land frontiers; and the union, though it had long existed in the form and as a part of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, is new in its present form, and new as an independent entity.

But though there are these differences, there is likeness as well as difference; and there is room for our two democracies to compare their problems and to learn (so far as the differences permit) from one another's experience.

British democracy has another feature of multiplicity besides its multi-national character. There is a British Commonwealth, spread over the oceans, as well as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The states of this British Commonwealth—Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa—are also democracies, independent and autonomous democracies, which stand as equals by the side of British democracy, and which, in many respects, are more advanced democracies than the democracy of Great Britain. It is the co-existence and co-operation of all the democracies of the British Commonwealth which is the major source of the strength of British democracy. Adjectives are sometimes feeble things; and the adjective 'British' has hardly the strength to carry the burden of meaning with which it is loaded. 'British' is the adjective of Great Britain; but it is also the adjective of the British Commonwealth—indeed it is also the adjective of the whole British Empire and Commonwealth, and in its widest extension it embraces a population of over five hundred millions. Not all that is 'British' is yet democratic, if we understand the term 'British' in its widest and furthest extension. Democracy is indeed growing in India and in what is called 'the colonial empire'—that is to say, the colonial territories of Africa and Asia. It is growing—or perhaps it would be more exact to say beginning—but it is not yet firmly established. This means that British democracy—in one sense of the adjective 'British,' the sense of what we have called the widest and furthest extension—is partly 'imperialistic,' or partly a 'trusteeship,' and not yet a complete democracy. The great Dominions of the Commonwealth are indeed full and complete democracies. But India is still in some measure, and the British Colonies in a still greater

measure, under some sort of tutelage exercised by the governing organs of the British democracy in Great Britain. This is a difference—a difference which it is difficult to express precisely—between our two democracies. The problems of Czechoslovak democracy are problems within the frontiers of Czechoslovakia. The problems of British democracy are problems which extend to the continents of Asia and Africa.

The writer has dealt with some of the larger considerations which arise from an attempt to compare the nature of Czechoslovak with that of British democracy. There are still some other considerations, of a more internal and domestic scope, which may be treated in conclusion.

The first and the larger of these considerations is concerned with the general machinery of national democracy, and more particularly with the method of parliamentary elections and the system of parliamentary parties. In Britain the method of parliamentary elections proceeds almost entirely on the basis of single-member constituencies; and the vote of the elector in these constituencies is a single non-transferable vote. The British feel that the single-member constituency keeps the member and his constituents in touch with one another; and they generally prefer the method of the single non-transferable vote because it seems to them to fit best with the genius of their party system. That party system is, on the whole, a system of two or three parties (the Conservative and the Labour party, with a smaller party of Liberals), and not a system of multiple parties. It has also a further characteristic which is of considerable importance. The British party organizations in no way dominate parliament or the parliamentary leaders: on the contrary, they are dominated by their parliamentary leaders. An attempt was indeed made, some seventy or eighty years ago, to make party organizations outside parliament supreme over the parliamentary representatives and leaders; but the attempt failed completely. The dominance of the parliamentary leaders over the party organizations out-

side parliament is now the established British tradition—though less perhaps on the Labour side than on the Conservative—and this is a fact which colours and controls the general system of party politics in Britain.

Czechoslovak democracy has here proceeded on different lines—perhaps more logical, but certainly different. It has adopted a system of large constituencies, each returning a number of members—on an average about fifteen. In these large constituencies the voters have voted not for a single candidate, as voters do in Britain, but for a party list; and a system of proportional representation, nicely and logically adjusted, has controlled the allocation of votes. The electoral system of multiple constituencies is naturally connected with a system of multiple parties; and parliamentary parties in Czechoslovakia have accordingly been numerous and have run into double figures. There has also been another feature of the Czechoslovak system of parliamentary parties. Party organizations, instead of being controlled by parliamentary leaders, have tended to control their leaders. One of the most notable results of this tendency has been the organization called the Petka. This organization was connected with the existence of multiple party cabinets—themselves connected in their turn with the existence of a multiple party system in parliament and the electorate. The Petka was what may be called a multiple-party ring of different party managers, which negotiated and made compromises on behalf of the different parties represented in the cabinet and then transmitted the results to the cabinet as the lines of the policy which it should follow in guiding parliament. Czechoslovak democracy thus accepted, and accepted in a notable form, the triumph of party organization which Britain refused to admit in the decade between 1870 and 1880. An important issue is here involved which is one of the most vital of issues in the internal and domestic working of a democracy. What is the proper relation of party as one of the necessary organs of parliamentary

democracy, to the three other necessary organs—electorate, parliament and cabinet? Has it any position of dominance, or even priority? Or must it fit in with the other three on a system of balance—a system of 'give and take'—in which each of the four makes its own peculiar and proper contribution to the general operation of parliamentary democracy and none of the four encroaches on any of the other?

The answer to this question is one which the Sphinx of history is likely to demand from us all in the rest of this century. It is indeed a crucial question. So much depends on fitting party into its proper place in the machinery of democracy. If it gets out of gear the State may be reduced to a chaos of conflicting would-be-sovereign parties, and the issue of the chaos may be a single dominant totalitarian party. Yet democracy is impossible without parties, which formulate programmes and offer candidates for that 'citizen's choice' which is the essence of democracy. Here, in this matter of party and of the proper position of party in the democratic state, it is wise that we should all compare our experiences, and that each should learn from the successes—and the failures—of the other. In any comparison of the different forms of modern democracy this is the cardinal ground of comparison. In the comparison of Czechoslovak and British democracy it is perhaps particularly cardinal. We have followed such different lines. What have we each gained—and lost—by following the line of our choice?

One last consideration remains. It concerns the sphere of local government. British democracy, it was said in an earlier passage, is double—a democracy of voluntary society as well as a democracy of the organized legal State. But British democracy might even be said to be triple: for it also includes a democracy of local government. The counties and boroughs of Britain are all governed freely by their own freely elected councils, acting through the local officials which their councils freely appoint and control. True, the central government

supervises the action of the local authorities in so far as it subvents their funds by making its own 'grants in aid,' and in so far as, in virtue of these grants, and to make sure that its aid has been properly used, it inspects and criticizes local expenditure and the policy on which it is based. But on the whole, and in the main, the action of the local authorities is an independent action, which finds its mainspring in local elected bodies and local public opinion; and the relation between local governing authorities and the central government is something in the nature of a *condominium*. Not all democracies are of this pattern. France, for example, prefers a system of local government which is, in general, centrally inspired as well as centrally controlled. She believes that the vigour of national democracy depends on its having local organs which will easily respond to its movement and readily execute its will. But the British counties and boroughs have old traditions of independence; and the growth of British national democracy has been accompanied by a respect for these old local traditions. Czechoslovakia has had to build a new tradition of local government, as indeed she has generally had to build her institutions anew and, as it were, from the ground. Perhaps, in building that tradition, she has followed the French example. As France instituted new *departements* after the Revolution of 1789, so Czechoslovakia, by the law of 1927 on local government, created new circles in her four provinces, which, like the French *departements,* were based on geography rather than on history and sentiment. As France gives her minister of the interior in Paris a large voice in the conduct of local government, so Czechoslovakia, by the same law of 1927, arranged that a third of the members of the circle councils should be nominated from Prague. There is room for varieties of local government; and the French variety, as has just been said, can be fairly regarded as, like the British but in a different way, democratic in its spirit. But here again there is room for a balanced comparison of the merits and the defects of the

two different types—between the logic of the Czech type, which gives the preference to the claims of national democracy, and the compromises and anomalies of the British type, which tries to reconcile the claims of local democracy with the rights of national democracy. Such a comparison can only result in mutual instruction. And the end and object of this brief essay is simply to suggest and promote the common education of our two democracies by the way of such mutual instruction.

WICKHAM STEED

Edward Beneš

WHENEVER I have to speak or to write of an old friend—and for nearly thirty years Dr. Beneš has allowed me to look upon him as a friend—a curious mental process sets in. I do not see the friend as a portrait or even a photograph. What I see is like a moving figure on a film. The outline is clear. The features, the gestures and the voice are distinct. Yet the total impression on my mind's eye is made up of a series of remembered episodes which, in rapid review, merge themselves into one synthetic picture.

So if, to-day, I meet President Beneš in London or elsewhere it is not only the sexagenarian Head of the Czechoslovak Republic whom I see. I am, of course, aware that he is one of the outstanding statesmen of our age, that his fame has spread to the ends of the earth, that his counsel is sought and heeded by the leaders of countries larger than his own, and that with many years of constructive labour still before him he has long been an integral part of twentieth century history. It would be foolish to pretend that these things do not affect my view of him. In some ways they do. Still, I can honestly say that they do not materially alter the judgment of him which I formed in December 1915 when Professor T. G. Masaryk first brought him to see me in London.

Masaryk introduced him without other recommendation than a few words to the effect that Beneš had come to work with him. Masaryk always spoke English to me. Beneš could not then speak English or French with ease. So he and I talked German which, I noticed, he spoke with a Czech accent. He struck me at once as 'somebody.' Before he left

I felt he was one of those rare men who can be trusted absolutely. It was 'trust at first sight' and it has never changed.

I should perhaps explain that my work often obliged me to form swift judgments of the men I met. In 1915 I was Foreign Editor of *The Times*. Before then I had been its correspondent in Berlin, Rome, Vienna and other places for some seventeen years. I had come into contact with Heads of States, diplomatists, statesmen, ecclesiastics and politicians of whom not all wore their hearts on their sleeves or would have scrupled to mislead me in their own interests. Experience therefore induced me to adopt a special technique. At my first meeting with any of them I made my conscious mind a complete blank so that it might be a mental void, an unprejudiced vacuum into which their spoken and unspoken thoughts might freely flow. Then my unconscious mind sorted out the impressions they made upon me and decided whether those who had made them deserved confidence entire or partial, distrust tempered by caution, or uncompromising hostility.

This technique I had applied to Masaryk in 1907. In less than half an hour the foundations of our friendship were laid. I applied it likewise to Beneš in 1915. Our first talk may have lasted an hour, or less. Within that time I had given him my absolute confidence. It may have been reciprocated.

Thereafter I saw him either in London, whenever he crossed the Channel, or in Paris whither I went frequently during the war of 1914–18. What little I could do to help him I did. His intelligence impressed me no less than his character. Especially striking was his ability—an ability he shared with Masaryk—to put himself in the place of any foreign statesman with whom he might have to deal, and to think out his own problems in terms of that statesman's interests or prejudices. Thus he saved many a minister or politician in Allied countries from irksome mental effort. When ability of this kind is coupled with complete integrity of purpose and character, the result

is a powerful combination of flexibility and uprightness. In this combination—possible only to a mind of deep and swift understanding—lies, I believe, a main secret of the achievements of Edward Beneš.

A main secret, not the full explanation. Any adequate explanation would have to take account of other factors also. Among these would be his patriotism burning with a glow so steady that it sheds a radiance akin to sunlight; his love of truth, as it may be given him to see the truth in its many-sidedness; love of his fellow men, undimmed by experience of their shortcomings unless that experience prove them to be men of evil intent; an inner humility that is proof against vanity or arrogance; and unwavering faith in responsible freedom as the highest condition of human society.

This, at least, is my reading of Edward Beneš as regards the broad lines of his character, though many subtler lines go to any faithful rendering of his moral features. Self-effacing modesty is one of them. I detected it when I once saw him blush. In my book *Through Thirty Years* I had told how a Scotland Yard police inspector, attached to the British Passport Office at Havre, had taken me aside in January 1917 and whispered:

"Do you know anything about a fellow who calls himself Beenees, sir? We don't like him. We know he is an Austrian, yet he comes through here, from time to time, with a Serbian passport. How can an Austrian be a Serbian? He is very mysterious and we have put a black mark against him. Whenever he turns up, though his papers seem to be in order, we run him in for a bit, so as to make him miss his boat. But we have not yet been able to catch him out."

As I felt it would be hopeless to expound the intricacies of Austrian politics to this worthy detective, I told him that 'Beenees' was a friend of mine, straight as a die, and might soon be signing passports which Scotland Yard would have to respect. Thereafter, I believe, 'Beenees' suffered no more in

a British 'quod' at Havre from seasickness deferred. But when a Czech translation of my book had made this little story known, Beneš said to me, blushing with embarrassment: "You see, my people at home never knew I had been in prison." He had allowed them to think that his work as Masaryk's right-hand man abroad had been done without discomfort while, at home, his devoted wife, whom the Austrians arrested and imprisoned, had been in danger of her life. What this had meant to him only those could guess who saw Beneš before and after Madame Beneš was able to join him in Paris late in 1918. Then they found a Beneš transfigured by gladness and could divine something of the worth to him of the love of so beautiful a woman and so rare a soul.

Neither then nor at any time did Beneš tell me of what his wife and he had done to provide material means for Masaryk's great adventure. No word of the risks he had run to join Masaryk ever escaped his lips, though they had appalled Masaryk himself. It was always of the work, never of himself, that he spoke. Nor did he seem to mind if at times I meddled in this work with ungloved hand.

In May 1917 Masaryk was called from London to Russia where a constitutional resolution in March had put some of his friends in power. Before leaving, Masaryk delegated his authority in England, temporarily, to Dr. Seton-Watson and to me, on the understanding that we should call Beneš from Paris to deal with any serious emergency. One day such an emergency threatened to arise. Something had to be done about it immediately, since a week or more might pass before Beneš could get to London. So, in agreement with Seton-Watson, I took drastic steps to avert it. Even if Beneš was surprised by them, when he could come to take things in hand, he did not show it. I think he understood.

He needed a little longer to understand another piece of meddling of which I was guilty. In *Through Thirty Years* I have related that during the summer of 1918 Beneš secured

from the French Government recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council " as the first basis " of the future Czechoslovak Government. Then he came to London to seek British recognition on the same terms, so that he might telegraph the news to Masaryk at Washington where the United States Government was disposed to grant recognition as soon as France and England should have granted it.

On the evening of his arrival in London Beneš asked me whether I thought the British Foreign Office, of which Mr. A. J. (afterwards Earl) Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil were then in charge, would make any difficulty about giving British recognition. I advised him to try the French formula on them. Next evening he returned, looking rather downcast. Both Mr. Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil had declined the French Formula without suggesting any other way of giving recognition. They argued that for Great Britain to recognize the Czechoslovak National Council " as the first basis " of the future Government of an independent Czechoslovak State would be to limit the freedom of the Czechoslovak people to set up their Government on another basis should they wish to do so. Beneš knew so well that Masaryk, General Stefánik and he (who formed the Czechoslovak National Council) possessed the confidence both of the Czechoslovak people and of the Czechoslovak Legion, which was then making its way through Siberia towards Vladivostok, that he feared lest British unwillingness to grant recognition might mask some unconfessed design.

I asked him whether Balfour and Robert Cecil had raised any other objection than the one he had mentioned; and when he said they had not I told him he would get his recognition on the morrow. He wanted to know whether I had heard anything from the Foreign Office. I had heard nothing; but I felt that if the words " as the first basis of " were really the only objection it could be got over by changing a word or two. So I took the French formula he had discussed with Balfour

and Robert Cecil, put my pen through the words " as the first basis of " and wrote above them " as trustee for " the future Czechoslovak Government. " Take that to the Foreign Office to-morrow," I said, " and you will get your recognition."

Beneš, who does not like to work in the dark, wished to know what ' trustee ' really meant. We were talking French and he asked me to give him the French equivalent of it. I told him there was no French equivalent, that ' trustee ' is a mystical word which would soothe the consciences of our people by making them feel that they had not tied the hands of the Czechoslovaks or limited their freedom to set up another sort of government if they wanted to. As I was convinced that they would not want to set up another kind of government, I felt sure that he would be on safe ground.

Still puzzled, and only half-persuaded, Beneš went back to the Foreign Office next day and came in glad haste to see me in the afternoon. " They have agreed to recognize us," he exclaimed, " they made not the slightest difficulty. They swallowed the word ' trustee ' like cream, but I still don't know what it means."

In later years Beneš learned more of the odd workings of British minds. Masaryk, to whom he telegraphed the British formula, soon obtained recognition from President Wilson also. I have often chuckled over the only moment in a long friendship when I saw Beneš go ahead ' on the first basis of ' something he had not fully grasped.

A few months later, at the beginning of November 1918, he told me of the bewilderment he had felt when he met in Switzerland the members of a deputation which had come from Prague to confer with him as soon as Czechoslovak independence had been proclaimed on October 28th. He had found that his views of the war and of its meaning, formed during his three years' work in Allied countries, were almost incomprehensible to equally patriotic fellow-countrymen who had lived in Central Europe and had unconsciously come

under the influence of Austrian and German misrepresentations. As he talked with them he felt that a long process of unlearning as well as of learning might have to be gone through before the Czechoslovak people could perceive why Germany and Austria-Hungary had been defeated, or could gain a sound knowledge of the past and a constructive outlook on the future.

What Beneš told me then impressed me deeply. It impresses me still; for I am sure that it will be much harder after this war than it was after the war of 1914–18 to reach a common denominator between the ideas of the United Nations in general, and of the Western Allies in particular, and the ideas that will prevail even in liberated countries. In November 1918 the story Beneš told me inspired an attempt which I made to induce the British and French Governments to take in hand the gradual enlightenment of the German people, by Germans who had lived outside Germany, upon the reasons for the defeat of German militarism. The attempt was thwarted by circumstances beyond my control and I have always regretted it. At the end of this war some similar effort will have to be made on a much larger scale and carried through persistently if any way of approach to a common European outlook is to be found. Nowadays there is talk of the 're-education' of the German people. The idea behind the talk is sound. To apply it successfully will be immensely difficult. But I am sure that Dr. Beneš, who was the first to realize the fundamental nature of this problem, would be well qualified to suggest means of tackling it with some prospect of success.

By the time the Paris Peace Conference met on January 16th, 1919, Masaryk was installed in Prague as the first President of the Republic, and Beneš, as Czechoslovak Foreign Secretary, was one of its delegates in Paris. This establishment of his position changed nothing in the flexibility of his mind or in his swift readiness to meet any emergency that

might arise. Alongside of my journalistic duties I was then confidential adviser upon the affairs of Central and South Eastern Europe to the Peace Delegation of the United States. Very early in the Conference a serious conflict arose between the Poles and the Czechoslovaks about Teschen in Austrian Silesia. France had recognized the right of the Czechs to occupy provisionally the mining districts round Teschen, but the Czechs held their hand pending similar recognition from the British and American Governments. Meanwhile an Austrian paper mentioned the French authorization. Polish troops at once took possession of the region and drove out the local Czechs. For a moment there was danger of serious fighting; but Masaryk and Beneš handled the matter so prudently that an immediate crisis was averted. On February 2nd, however, President Wilson's chief adviser, Colonel House, sent me an important message. President Wilson, he said, was worried by the refusal of the Czechoslovaks to sign a provisional agreement with the Poles upon Teschen and Silesia which had been drawn up by Allied Commissioners. He urged me to do what I could to persuade the Czechs to sign the provisional agreement forthwith, and not to wait for it to be imposed upon them by the Conference. As I knew how patient Beneš and Masaryk had been I found this task disagreeable. Nevertheless Beneš came at once on receipt of a telephone message from me and, after some talk, agreed to sign the provisional agreement and to write officially to Clémenceau, as President of the Conference, to this effect. His promptness made an excellent impression and increased goodwill towards him. I have never known Beneš miss a point by pedantic insistence upon unessentials when something more essential was to be gained or retained by taking a common-sense view of things.

Nor have I known him subordinate a matter of principle to any consideration of expediency. It was a principle of his foreign policy that Czechoslovakia, as a democratic Republic, must work loyally with the great Western democracies, France

and England. If, at that time, his own personal relations with France and French public men were closer than his relations with British public men and the British Government, he cultivated friendship with them all and strove to promote understanding between London and Paris. He was grieved and disappointed when, after the Peace Conference, England and France tended to fall apart, for his policy was based upon co-operation with both on the basis of a League of Nations Covenant which he wished to strengthen. In 1920 he did succeed in bridging a gap between the British and French Prime Ministers but he firmly, and wisely, declined to take part in a Franco-British conference. As the representative of a smaller country he was determined not to be put in a position that would compel him either to side with France against England or with England against France. There were moments when the British Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, failed to understand or to appreciate his impartiality. Once, at the International Economic Conference at Genoa in the spring of 1922, Beneš withstood Mr. Lloyd George's pressure to espouse the British case against France, even though Beneš personally may have desired, as Mr. Lloyd George desired, the development of better relations between the Western Powers and Soviet Russia. I saw much of Beneš in those days and know how strong and how unfair was the pressure put upon him. A smaller man might either have yielded or have revolted. Beneš did neither. He stood his ground without provocation and without yielding an inch. Mr. Lloyd George found it hard to forgive him.

No less firm was Beneš in the autumn of 1923 in withstanding French pressure for the conclusion of a hard and fast Franco-Czechoslovak military alliance of which the effect would have been to make Czechoslovakia a satellite rather than an ally of the French Republic. Clearly though he understood the need for a military understanding with France after the refusal of the United States to enter the League of

Nations, Beneš was determined that the understanding should provide for co-operation between independent democracies and should not entail the subordination of one country to another. So, despite French pressure, he laid down the only conditions on which a military convention could be concluded and declined to depart from them. The French Government ended by accepting them and by agreeing that Czechoslovakia should have the right to be consulted and informed upon all aspects of French policy in Europe. He maintained the same quality of co-operative independence in negotiating the treaties between Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Roumania which, together, formed the Little Entente.

In his mind all these international agreements were conceived as means of strengthening the League of Nations and of rendering its Covenant a valid safeguard of European peace. My own faith in the League of Nations had not been robust. I had witnessed the somewhat hasty drafting of its Covenant during the Paris Peace Conference, and had felt that its efficacy would be likely to depend upon the willingness of the United States to become an active member of the League. In this event Franco-British concord would be more easily preserved. But when in 1920 it became known that the Washington Senate had rejected the Treaty of Versailles, of which the League Covenant formed the first twenty-six Articles, I doubted whether the British Government would fulfil the obligations under the League Covenant it had entered into on the understanding that the United States would join the League. In June 1924, however, after President Masaryk had called me to Prague for consultation upon a delicate point of foreign policy, Beneš invited me to go with him to Geneva and to see the League Council and Secretariate at work. He told me of his hope that the first British Labour Government formed by Ramsay MacDonald, and the French Liberal Government under Edouard Herriot, might improve relations between Paris and London and work together to strengthen

the League. At Geneva I was influenced by what came to be called 'the League atmosphere' and by the efficiency of the Secretariate.

Shortly afterwards Herriot visited Ramsay MacDonald in London. By chance I learned that their conversations had ended in a deadlock and that Herriot, whom I knew slightly, was about to return to Paris in a mood of angry disappointment. On enquiry I found that there had been a real misunderstanding and that both MacDonald and Herriot had been the victims of an official translator whose pedantically accurate rendering of their words had obscured their real intentions. Arrangements were therefore made for another meeting between them at which an equally competent but less pedantic official translator should be present. The result was an agreement between the two Prime Ministers that both would attend the League Assembly in September and would jointly support a policy that would strengthen the League while opening the way for Germany to enter it.

Therefore I returned to Geneva in September 1924 in the hope that good progress might be made. I found Beneš no less hopeful. He had worked in 1923 with Lord Robert Cecil and other men of goodwill in drafting a Treaty of Mutual Assistance within the framework of the League Covenant. This Treaty the British Labour Government had rejected. But Beneš felt that if Ramsay MacDonald and Herriot could agree upon a joint Anglo-French policy many difficulties might disappear.

Both MacDonald and Herriot were well-disposed towards Germany though both had been disquieted by various German utterances and by the rapid growth of nationalist and militarist organizations which were not compatible with the obligations of Germany under the Peace Treaty. After having drawn the attention of the German Chancellor to these matters in June 1924 MacDonald and Herriot agreed that Germany should be invited to attend a conference on repara-

tions in London. The German Chancellor and his Foreign Secretary, Dr. Stresemann, therefore came to London and on August 5th negotiations began for the settlement of reparations by the Dawes Scheme. But Dr. Stresemann sought in vain to raise the question of 'war guilt'—as the Germans always called the attribution to Germany and her allies of responsibility for the war by Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty. As this Article was not an attribution of moral guilt but only a legal statement of claim for reparations which, under the Dawes Scheme, were to be considerably reduced, 'war guilt' was not discussed at the London Conference. On his return to Berlin, where the Reichstag ratified the Dawes Scheme, the German Chancellor publicly repudiated German responsibility for the war and, by implication, all liability for reparations. He added that the German Government would take occasion to bring this declaration officially to the knowledge of foreign Governments.

This was the position when Ramsay MacDonald and Herriot went to the League Assembly in September with the intention of paving the way for the admission of Germany to the League. Though, as I have said, the British Labour Government had rejected the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, France had approved of it in principle as tending to facilitate a limitation of armaments. The question was how far Ramsay MacDonald would be ready to go in the direction of increasing international security against war and of bringing British policy into line with that of France.

At the League Assembly Ramsay MacDonald spoke first on Thursday, September 4th. He appeared to forget that the Assembly was a hard-headed gathering of Prime Ministers, Foreign Secretaries, diplomatists, international lawyers and officials representing half a hundred Governments. So he harangued it as though it were an international pacifist meeting. He insisted that military force cannot give security, that alliances are a snare, and he pointed to 'empty benches'

which, he said, ought to be filled by German delegates. And he ended by suggesting that the League should convoke an international disarmament conference without making any positive provision for security against war.

The League Assembly was aghast. On the morrow Herriot, without mentioning MacDonald's harangue, demolished it indirectly by precise and sober reasoning. He insisted that any nation which should have recourse to war without submitting its claims to arbitration must be treated by all as an aggressor. He linked together in the three terms 'Arbitration-Security-Disarmament' the conditions of peaceful development. War, he said, had long been an abominable reality. Peace, in its turn, must become a reality; and arbitration must never be a trap for nations that accepted it in good faith. He was prepared to admit Germany to the League on condition that she should sincerely accept the Covenant and fulfil her engagements for disarmament. Respect for treaties and pledges must, he added, be the law for all.

Late on that afternoon, September 5th, 1924, MacDonald told me of his surprise and annoyance at Herriot's failure to back him up and asked whether I knew why Herriot had 'let him down.' He authorized me to see Herriot and to find out. Not till 11 p.m. could I put the question to Herriot who answered: "Before I spoke this morning I was officially informed from Paris that on Monday next the German Government intends to issue a circular note to the Powers repudiating all 'war guilt.' This repudiation is aimed at Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty on which all reparation claims are based, including the Dawes Plan itself. I simply could not embrace a Germany who is about to repudiate her treaty obligations. Doesn't MacDonald know this?"

A few minutes before midnight I saw MacDonald again and repeated to him what Herriot had said. Exclaiming that the Germans were always their own worst enemies he took up an unopened despatch from the Foreign Office, read it, and

found it confirmed Herriot's information. He said that a vigorous protest against the German intention ought to be made immediately. Then, between midnight and 1 a.m., he accompanied me downstairs.

Now MacDonald's rooms in a Geneva hotel were just above those of Beneš. As we passed Beneš's rooms his servant told me that Beneš was still up and wished to see me. So MacDonald and I saw Beneš together and discussed the position with him. Beneš proposed that a joint Anglo-French declaration of policy should be made to the Assembly that afternoon by MacDonald and Herriot. MacDonald agreed and began to discuss its terms. I reminded them that Herriot must be informed and consulted before they framed any declaration; and MacDonald proposed that Beneš and I should inform Herriot immediately.

Though the hour was very late or, rather, early, Beneš and I walked over to Herriot's hotel, roused the night porter and groped our way up to Herriot's rooms. Then Beneš hesitated. The idea of disturbing the slumbers of the French Prime Minister struck him as indiscreet. "C'est tout de même trop fort" he whispered. "It is," I answered, "for the Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia who must not compromise himself, but it isn't for me who am nobody." So I knocked at Herriot's door. Luckily Madame Herriot was still up. She opened the door, took my message to her husband who sat on his bed and agreed with Beneš that the thing ought to be done. Despite many hitches, which Beneš helped to overcome in the course of the morning and afternoon, it was done. MacDonald and Herriot jointly recommended to the League Assembly a resolution instructing the competent committees of the League to consider all the available material bearing on security, the reduction of armaments and arbitration, with the object of binding all nations to settle international disputes by peaceful means. The resolution was unanimously adopted. MacDonald and Herriot left Geneva that night in the belief that

their visit had not been fruitless. On the morrow Beneš set to work and produced a document from which emerged, after three weeks of labour and discussion, the famous 'Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes' which the League Assembly adopted on October 1st.

In this 'Geneva Protocol' the League of Nations touched the high-water mark of its achievements. The main, almost the exclusive, credit for it belonged to Beneš. Though a British Conservative Government rejected the Protocol in the following March, and persuaded its Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain (who was not a whole-hearted opponent of it) to denounce it on the fallacious plea that it sought to maintain peace "by organizing war on the largest scale," the very possibility that Great Britain might ratify it had induced Dr. Stresemann to make proposals for a 'Western Security Pact' which led ultimately to the treaties and agreements signed at Locarno on October 16th, 1925. Among those treaties was one between Czechoslovakia and Germany by which both countries undertook to submit to arbitration all differences that might not be settled by negotiation. When, in September 1938, Beneš invoked this treaty Hitler brushed it aside—without protest from Great Britain or France. So 'Munich' prevailed over 'Locarno.'

Now, as one consequence of failure to observe the principles of the Geneva Protocol, the world has had several years of 'war on the largest scale.' If any one man can truthfully say that he is in no way answerable for this, that man is Edward Beneš. He strove to strengthen the League against war. He built up the Little Entente as a regional safeguard against war. He accepted the Locarno Agreements in the 'spirit of Locarno.' He was among the original signatories of the Treaty of Paris, or Briand-Kellogg Pact, in August 1928, for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy, though Dr. Stresemann was actually the first man to sign it. Beneš negotiated the Russo-Czechoslovak Treaty at a time

when few understood the principle, which Litvinoff was presently to proclaim, that "peace is indivisible." He may have trusted British and French Governments more fully than they deserved; yet what Englishman can cast a stone at him on this account? Nor ought even those Britons who lent an ear to the specious claims of Henlein and of Hitler's other agents on behalf of the 'Sudeten Germans' now to upbraid Beneš for having looked upon Henlein's professions of loyalty to Czechoslovakia with something less than unquestioning faith.

Indeed, before any Britons find fault with Edward Beneš they should put to themselves, and honestly answer, one crucial question. This question is whether they would have preferred him to stand his ground in September 1938, not to yield to Franco-British pressure, not to resign the Presidency of the Czechoslovak Republic on the morrow of 'Munich' but rather to explode with a million Czechoslovak soldiers, thousands of aircraft and the tanks and guns of Czechoslovak arsenals what he knew to be the futile pretence that 'Munich' had brought to Western Europe 'peace in our time' and 'peace with honour.' Until Britons have fairly faced and answered this question they can form no valid judgment of Edward Beneš or even begin to comprehend the fierce ordeal through which he passed.

I, who can claim to know something of the workings of his mind since 1915, and who heard from his lips in July 1938 the inner story of the crisis in the previous May when he foiled Hitler's plan for a sudden onslaught on Czechoslovakia, have never ventured or even desired to discuss with him the far more fearful crisis of September 1938. One does not lightly tread on ground hallowed by sacrifice. It was the supreme and most searching test of his whole life. It must have taxed his every energy of mind, his every virtue of soul and heart. All his patriotism, all his devotion to his country and to its freedom regained barely twenty years earlier after three cen-

turies of servitude, all his loyalty to Masaryk and to the Czechoslovak State he had laboured with Masaryk to found and to build up, must then have been focussed on one burning issue—not to yield or to yield, to allow desperate heroism to overrule far-sighted moderation or to take a far harder decision inspired by faith in the indwelling righteousness of his country's cause?

Of one thing all who knew Beneš well could be sure: No thought of personal prestige or of personal safety will have entered his mind. So little did these things weigh with him that when he had given up the Presidency of the Republic and had withdrawn to his country home he took no precautions against Hitler's designs on his freedom or his life, and had to be saved, together with his precious archives, by a relative who flew from London to rescue him.

Yet if I have never mentioned to him those fearful weeks and days I have, as an Englishman, sought to measure what his decision may have meant for my own country and, perhaps, for the freedom of the world. At a word from him the Czechoslovak army would have fought valiantly in October 1938. It expected to fight. It had seen with bitter humiliation the fruitless concessions of its Government to German demands supported by Anglo-French pressure. The Czechoslovak soldiers and people could hardly know that in the small hours of one horrid night their President had been roused by the British and French Ministers in Prague to learn from Lord Halifax and M. Daladier that should he not yield to German pretensions he would be responsible for plunging Europe into war, and that his country must expect neither help nor support from Britain or France. They may not have realized that Russian aid depended upon French fulfilment of an allied duty, or that Czechoslovakia would have been charged with bringing Bolshevism into Central Europe had Russia nevertheless assisted her. They certainly could not foresee what play Nazi Germany would have made with such

an accusation or how it would have been exploited by Hitler's 'fifth columns' everywhere.

What the Czechoslovak nation may not then have understood, the British friends of Czechoslovakia dimly apprehended. Therefore they could not question the rightness of the decision Beneš took, however indignant they may have felt to hear a British Prime Minister dismiss the people of Hus, Comenius and Masaryk as "people of whom we know nothing." They saw something of the hasty measures improvised in England to meet an impending danger. They were aware of British unpreparedness—moral no less than military—for a great European war. I, at any rate, was convinced that the decision of Beneš could only postpone, not avert, such a war. In truth his sacrifice of himself and his country gave Great Britain a respite for which, shamefully though it was bought, Englishmen must be eternally grateful.

So, I believe, Britons who honestly face the question raised by the decision of Beneš must answer it by recognizing that thanks to it, and to it alone, the issue in the war of 1939–45 was made indisputably clear, the full villainy of Nazi Germany revealed, and the Allied cause exalted to a crusade against intolerable evil. The sacrifice of Czechoslovakia was not made in vain. And knowing Beneš as I know him I am convinced that in those days and hours of fierce wrestling with his heart and conscience, he saw with a seer's vision what was right for his country and the world, resolved to do it, and did it.

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At the Peace Conference

THE account of Dr. Edvard Beneš's activity and achievements at the Peace Conference (1918–19) is a record of the greatest importance not only in the history of the First World War, but in that of the Second World War as well. The fact that the Republic of Czechoslovakia has once more been recognized within its pre-Munich boundaries by the Soviet Union, England and the United States makes the story of the Peace Conference doubly important and gives it a historic setting which is truly unique. The work of Dr. Beneš in 1918–19 has passed the severest possible test, and there is at present every chance that it will emerge unscathed in the next peace-making. The tragic course of history has completely justified its fundamental soundness and enduring wisdom.

It is not difficult to find good and adequate reasons for this course of events. When Dr. Beneš entered the Peace Conference he was no amateur. Trained as a social scientist, both by academic study and actual observation in the laboratory of history, he spent the decade before the First World War in consciously directed study and observation, not only in Bohemia, but in France, England and Germany. An account of these years of travel and study, as well as an analysis of his published writings and of his private correspondence, indicates he went about the business of training himself for the task of being a statesman. He had an objective, from which he did not swerve before any obstacles, whether financial or social. These years were years of untiring labour performed in straightened financial circumstances.

To this decade of preparation must be added the four years

of war in which he rose in stature, year by year, from that of a humble university professor in a small and almost unknown country to that of an acknowledged European statesman of first rank.

His academic training and his keen observations in the international scene taught him that historic forces of great power and far-reaching consequences were transforming the world, that the crucial and difficult problem of the independence of his nation could and would be solved in line with these forces and that such a solution would be lasting. The world-wide historic forces of nationalism and the Industrial Revolution, which meant democracy and economic and social reform, made inevitable the disintegration of Austria-Hungary. Metternich, who had maintained for a generation the task of holding together the Habsburg Monarchy and who once proudly remarked that "his mind never entertained error," wrote after his flight from Vienna during the Revolution of 1848 to his friend Kübeck: "I do not see an Austrian Empire any more. It is dissolved. The task is no longer to preserve, to maintain what was, but to build anew." The Ausgleich of 1867, which forcibly established the domination of two minorities, the German and the Magyar, was no solution of the basic problem of Central Europe. It did not 'build anew.' It required only the strain of the First World War to crumble to pieces this artificially contrived edifice and with it to destroy the hegemony of Germany in Europe. Dr. Beneš thoroughly understood this. His *Le problème autrichien et la question tchèque* (1908) and *Détruisez l'Autriche-Hongrie* (1916), as well as many other products of his pen, prove it. The problem of the oppressed nations was not only a national question, it was economic, social and cultural as well. A social scientist, like his great teacher, Professor Thomas G. Masaryk, his objective became to apply the acknowledged results of work in this field to the problems of diplomacy and statesmanship. Both were chiefly responsible

for the progressive democracy which Czechoslovakia became. Never did two men agree so thoroughly in ideals, in principles and policy, and, though separated by huge distances during the war, work out in such parallel fashion the numerous and difficult problems of the liberation of a nation and the launching of a new state in a chaotic world. Theirs is an achievement of abiding significance for educators everywhere on the value of sound education in the Social Sciences, accompanied by training in the field of action. They were the teachers of something new, the harbingers of a new statesmanship which will be increasingly necessary in the world of the future, if it is to begin to solve its problems.

Conducted through secret channels, in close collaboration with a disciplined and enlightened nation, the diplomatic and military struggle led by Professor Masaryk and Dr. Beneš based itself on a clear political programme, which was soon incorporated in the war aims of the Entente, on sound means and methods for carrying it out, and on the organization of armed forces, which, as in the case of the Czechoslovak Army in Russia, were to electrify the Entente with their achievements. Step by step, the Czechoslovak nation in line with these developments passed from passive to active resistance. Thus Czechoslovakia was recognized as a state *de jure* before the signing of the armistice with Austria-Hungary. Dr. Beneš entered the Peace Conference as the representative of a fully recognized state, the first so admitted from Central and Eastern Europe.

In spite of this unique and amazing achievement, the task of Dr. Beneš and the Czechoslovak Delegation which he headed, assisted for a time by Prime Minister Dr. Karel Kramář, was not an easy one. Austria-Hungary had disappeared, even if there still remained irreconcilable and hostile elements, partly religious, partly racial, which somehow hoped to salvage or resuscitate the fallen empire in some form or other or at least to prevent the construction of a viable Czecho-

slovak state. To draw boundaries for six new states on the ruins of an old one, was the most complex and difficult operation that had ever faced a peace conference. To obtain a satisfactory basis for the sound existence of the Czechoslovak State in these circumstances required foresight, tact, hard and dexterous work and unlimited patience. It required the ability to win and keep the confidence of those who would make the basic and ultimate decisions. Above all, it required such policies as would leave more friends than enemies when the job was finished, and this was not easy to accomplish for a state which would border on four or five others, in view of the intricate problems which had to be settled and the chaos which the collapse of an empire had created.

The Czechoslovak Delegation presented a series of memoranda whose basic and vital claims included the lands of the Bohemian Crown (Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Silesia) in the former Austria and the Slovak territory in Hungary, the latter based on ethnic rights, with a boundary on the Danube, thus including Bratislava (Pressburg). Because Czechoslovakia would be a landlocked state, they included also claims to commercial rights on international railroads and on water connections leading down the rivers rising in Czechoslovakia and flowing to the seas through other countries. Such were the minimum or indispensable claims for a viable state.

Besides these, claims were advanced which were requested as desirable and which were submitted for discussion and compromise. Among these were the incorporation of Sub-Carpathian Russia, a land corridor connecting Czechoslovakia and Jugoslavia, and the protection of the Czechoslovak minority in Vienna and of the Lusatian Serb or Wendish minority in Germany.

The Czechoslovak memoranda were outstanding not only as well-printed publications, but as lucid and trustworthy statements based on the best available statistical and other information, including always the last official Austro-

Hungarian census statistics (1910) and their own estimates for the nine years which had elapsed since that time. These memoranda received unusual credence because they were thoroughly prepared and reflected the excellent and accurate information with which the Czechoslovak information service had scored such brilliant success in the course of the war, for it had virtually predicted the course of events step by step.

Before the Peace Conference convened on January 18th, 1919, the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy had brought up the problem of occupation by Allied forces. As a fully recognized belligerent ally, the Czechoslovak Government through Dr. Beneš requested and received the right to occupy the regions indicated in its minimum territorial claims until final disposition by the Peace Conference.

On February 5th, the Council of Ten heard Dr. Beneš's presentation of the claims of its delegation. It made a favourable impression. The Territorial Committee for Czechoslovak claims, created on February 28th under the chairmanship of M. Jules Cambon, took over the detailed study and critical analysis of the problems brought up by frontiers for Czechoslovakia. This commission consisted of ten members, two from each of the Great Powers. The other vital requirements of the new Czechoslovak State, its rail and water communications with the outer world, were dealt with in the Committee on Ports, Waterways and Railways, on which Prime Minister Dr. Karel Kramář represented Czechoslovakia. The Prime Minister attended also the meetings of the Committee on the League of Nations, and Dr. Beneš sat on the committees dealing with international law and with reparations and financial problems. Other matters, such as the difficult one of the return of the Czechoslovak army from Siberia, as well as the return of the armed forces in France and Italy with sufficient *matériel* and the home food supply problem to counteract the Bolshevik danger, not to mention the creation of a foreign policy, occupied at the same time much of Dr. Beneš's abundant and tireless energy.

To follow in proper detail any one of the many minor frontier arrangements which were considered, rejected or adopted by the Peace Conference would exhaust all of the space allotted to this chapter. Suffice it to say that the vital claims of the Czechoslovak Delegation, already referred to, were approved by the Territorial Committee, the Council of Ten and the Big Four after critical and thorough examination. The historic frontiers facing Germany and Austria, except for minor radifications, were established. The incorporation of Slovakia, along more precisely ethnical lines than the Czechoslovak claims, was decided upon. Pressburg and the Grosse Schütt were included therein. Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, under provisions for autonomy, was assigned to the Czechoslovak State. But the Teschen Question, between the Czechs and Poles, was not settled until the Conference of Spa in 1920, in spite of numberless committees, consultations and conferences, and even after that it remained an obstacle on the Polish side to complete co-operation between the two nations. In his historic address before the Czechoslovak Parliament on his return from the Peace Conference, on November 30th, 1919, Dr. Beneš said, " I regret with all my heart . . . that we were unable to agree " in the matter of Teschen.

Although the Peace Conference thus agreed to sanction the boundaries of a state with approximately one third of its population consisting of German and Magyar minorities, it did so conscious of the fact that nine or ten million Czechoslovaks should be favoured with independence in a viable state over three to four million Germans and Magyars. Sound geographic, strategic and economic reasons argued decisively then and argue now even more decisively for the historic frontiers. The brotherhood of the overwhelming majority of Slovaks cemented with the Czechs by mutually endured oppression called for their incorporation in the same state entity and will do so again after this war. Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, which none except the Magyars desired should

return to Hungary, was for these reasons assigned to Czechoslovakia which thereby bordered on Rumania and eastern Galicia.

The Peace Conference was not unmindful of the minorities, which must always remain in the picture in Central and Eastern Europe, no matter who the peace-makers will be. Its leaders, under the driving power of President Woodrow Wilson, decided on the protection of minorities by treaties which each of the new states was to sign. Although in the case of some states, this led to opposition, in that of Czechoslovakia it led to willingness to go even farther in the protection of minorities than the actual treaty which was signed on September 10th, 1919. There were small states in the Peace Conference which strenuously demanded equal rights and treatment with the Great Powers which had put forth the final greatest efforts to win the war. Dr. Beneš believed that the small states could obtain all of their vital demands in collaboration with their more powerful friends on the basis of their mutual interests. He always held before him the ideal of asking for what could be obtained and of achieving the utmost possible in the given circumstances. He could see defects in decisions which were made, but he did not aim at the impossible. In this way he achieved success in his defence of vital territorial claims for Czechoslovakia. He had created a viable state.

Czechoslovakia's communications with the outer world were dealt with by Dr. Kramář in the Committee on Ports, Waterways and Railways in a successful manner. The interests of the new state in the Danube, Elbe and Oder as international rivers and in free zones in the ports of Hamburg and Stettin, as well as direct state-controlled rail connections to Trieste and Fiume, were acknowledged as legitimate and agreed upon.

More difficulties, some of them of a really vital character, appeared in the discussions in regard to reparations and the economic and financial problems of the fallen empire in the

treaty that was to be signed with Austria. Here the able and firm policy of Dr. Beneš bore results in that he was able to exclude Czechoslovakia from carrying a share of the reparations and war debts of the former empire, because the Czechoslovaks had opposed the war and had fought against Austria. In spite of some opposition at home, he was able to carry through his policy of attaining the possible. After long and complicated discussions it was agreed that Czechoslovakia should carry its share of the Austro-Hungarian pre-war debts, but not of the war debts. The new state was not to pay reparations, but in order to equalize the costs of war incurred by its allies it would make a contribution on behalf of its liberation, which for the new succession states was designated at one and a half billion francs.

Thus, in its connections by land and water with the outer world and in financial and economic matters, very acceptable arrangements had been arrived at.

Viewed in the perspective, the achievements of Dr. Beneš at the Peace Conference remain then as now indicative of sound and durable work, performed under difficulties which at times were almost insurmountable. In the midst of it all he was ever gracious, ever tactful, always viewing every problem in a broadminded manner.

Of him it may be truly said that he achieved the maximum, because he asked for the attainable. He had provided his nation with a vital territorial basis and a chance to start its life on sound political, diplomatic and economic foundations. He was a true disciple of Dr. Thomas G. Masaryk, the President-Liberator.

R. H. BRUCE LOCKHART

Some Personal Memories

I

THIS year of 1944, which marked the sixtieth birthday of President Beneš, is also a memorable date in the calendar of my own life, for in December we shall celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of our first meeting and of the beginning of an intimate friendship which, never neglected in the hey-day of the President's successes, has gained new strength from the misfortunes which have befallen his country. To-day my memories of that first meeting are blurred in the general portrait which I have formed of him in the course of the passing years. Much clearer in my mind is the recollection of the first occasion on which I ever saw his name. One day in the spring of 1918 I received in Moscow a telegram from our Foreign Office. It contained an instruction to approach the Bolshevik Government at once and to request it to give a free passage out of Russia to the Czechoslovak army which had been formed from prisoners of war in that country. The telegram referred to one Beneš, described as the Secretary of the Czechoslovak Council in Paris. At that time I had never met a Czech and in my ignorance I assumed that the name in the telegram was pronounced 'Beans.'

That telegram caused considerable complications in my own life. I used such persuasive powers as I possessed with the Bolsheviks and succeeded so far that, in spite of fierce German pressure and threats, they allowed the Czechoslovak troops to depart via Siberia. Then, when all seemed set fair, a storm cloud gathered and burst. There was a clash between the Czechoslovak troops and the local Bolshevik forces, and the Czechoslovaks had to fight their way out of Siberia. The

circumstances of this collision have never been satisfactorily explained, but the reactions in Moscow were swift and unpleasant. M. Maxa, my first Czechoslovak friend, who was at the time head of the Czechoslovak Rada in Moscow, was arrested and thrown into prison. From that moment my own good relations with the Bolshevik Government were broken, and three months later I shared the same fate as the gentle Maxa.

These first rather violent contacts with the Czechoslovaks did not deter me from my desire to cultivate their acquaintance, and after the war I had no hesitation in choosing Prague from the three posts which were offered to me. I arrived in Czechoslovakia at the end of 1919. Sir George Clerk, the new British Minister who later proved himself the most successful of all the British occupants of the Thun Palace, had not yet entered into residence. British prestige was not high. The French, represented by a victorious French general and a large military and political mission, dominated the diplomatic stage, and Dr. Beneš, as eager then to maintain a balance between France and Britain as he is to-day between Western and Eastern Europe, was glad to welcome someone who he felt had some sympathy with the Czechoslovak cause. Moreover, I came armed with warm letters of recommendation from Mr. Wickham Steed and Professor Seton-Watson. And then, as now—and doubtless to-morrow—no British subject visiting Prague for the first time would wish for a better passport. I was to remain there for the best part of eight years. These were spacious days in the new Czechoslovak Republic. Looking back across the years, I remember with wonder and nostalgic regret the remarkable freedom that existed throughout the Republic almost from the start. There were no restraints, no violence, no serious disturbances. Criticism was untrammelled and was freely exercised. The Deutsch-Böhmen —neither they themselves nor any one else dreamt of calling them Sudeten Germans in those days—disliked the Czechs

and, as Masaryk's principles of freedom gained strength, raised their voices. When I arrived in Prague, two German newspapers, one openly hostile to the new regime, were in free circulation. The bulk of the aristocracy, still *Habsburgtreu,* was ineffectually contemptuous and contented itself with foolish and feeble jokes about the clothes of the new Ministers. But from the beginning Czechoslovakia was an island of order in a sea of chaos. And when they looked out from that safe shore, both German-Bohemians and Habsburg landowners never allowed their criticism and their contempt to cross the border-line of self-interest.

Living was cheap. The country's finances were in good case and in good order. Democracy had made a flying start, and its opponents, assured of at least a partial security, were prudent enough to resist the risks of violence. Land reform was, of course, to them a Bolshevik measure. They said so in no uncertain voice to any one who would listen. Their campaign did the Czechs some harm in the eyes of the foreign diplomats, who, like every one else in Europe, saw a red light in even the mildest measure of social reform. But, as far as the Bohemian aristocrats were concerned, there was less alteration in their mode of living than they had feared. They still had good Czech servants to wait on them in their castles, and their shooting-parties continued much as formerly.

Relaxing after the strain of a long war, the Allied diplomats in Prague found life not unpleasant and took it easily. Some listened politely to the complaints of the opposition and for lending their ears were rewarded with invitations to shoot. Wise Ministers, like Sir George Clerk, made the best of both worlds and never allowed their judgment and their appraisal of Czech virtues to be influenced by their social pleasures. But for the most part we were content to enjoy the fruits of victory —mainly in their fermented form.

Meanwhile, the Czechs, paying little visible attention to their critics, worked with a fresh enthusiasm born of their

restored liberty. Three hundred years of servitude had left its mark on them. Not without a deep-rooted sensitiveness, they had learnt to conceal their feelings and to surround themselves with an impenetrable barrier of reserve. Rational in all things, they alone of all the Slav races were able to create a modern European political order without falling into absolute despotism or hopeless disorganization. This talent has been developed by a passionate pursuit of the benefits of education and by a tireless capacity for hard work. As I quickly discovered, the living embodiment of these two virtues was the young Foreign Minister, who, then only thirty-five, was busily putting into ordered practice the ideals and principles of President Masaryk.

I found myself well-suited to the Czechs who in many respects resemble the best type of Lowland Scot. I found myself particularly well-suited to Eduard Beneš. In him I was to find a wise and patient counsellor and a friend to whom I could always turn with the assured knowledge that his promise, once given, would never be broken. In that post-war period of retreating glory minor incidents of diplomatic misbehaviour were not infrequent. On more than one occasion I was asked to trade on my good relations with Beneš in order to prevent private unpleasantness from becoming public. Action was always taken, and the matter was never mentioned either to me or to any one else.

II

In 1919 Eduard Beneš was the youngest Foreign Minister in Europe. In addition, he was the favourite disciple of Masaryk, and in the Cabinet it was his task to see that the principles of his master were put into practice without causing complications in the foreign relations of the new Republic. His mental equipment for these arduous duties was thoroughly efficient. A professional economist and sociologist, he had steeped himself in the works of Comte, Durkheim, Locke,

Hume, John Stuart Mill and Spencer. As a youth he had been brought to the study of Russia by Masaryk. With only one ambition in life: to free his country from foreign domination, he had mastered the theory of diplomacy long before the last war. A master of simplifications and clear thinking he set himself two goals: in internal politics to reduce the contrast between wealth and poverty to a minimum; in his foreign policy to provide his country with the maximum of security. These two principles, the first of which was achieved with remarkable success within the first decade of the new Republic, govern his life to-day. But their practical application entailed an almost superhuman strain on his physical and mental energy. Since the Czech aristocracy foolishly persisted in boycotting the new regime, he had to create an entirely new foreign service from untrained personnel. The task could be achieved only by hard work and by a rigid asceticism. Eduard Beneš has always been a worker; he has always been an ascetic. Since his first experiment as a boy, he has never smoked. Although he occasionally sips a glass of white wine well diluted with water, he is to all intents and purposes a teetotaller. During his recent visit to Moscow, he came through his two banquets with Stalin with great success by bringing with him his own toast-drinker. During the first years of the new Republic his day began at 6 a.m. and rarely finished before midnight. Official receptions—and in the early days of the Republic there had to be many—were a bugbear to him, but even these he put to good use. Madame Beneš entertained the guests with quiet distinction. Young diplomacy danced with the wife of the Socialist Prime Minister, an Austrian blonde and a tireless exponent of the Viennese waltz. But the young Minister of Foreign Affairs made only a fleeting appearance in the brilliantly lit ballroom of the Hradčany. If he was wanted because a senior diplomat had arrived, a game of hide-and-seek began. Some minutes would elapse before he was tracked to some small room where he was sure to be

engaged in discussing some weighty matter with one of his own colleagues or with the British Minister. Politics is the absorbing interest of his life, and for him a holiday is merely another form of political work.

To-day, as President, he has mellowed a little, but even then he could unbend if one knew how to penetrate the barriers of his reserve. In this respect I was well served by my interest in the revolution and in Russia. I had come through two revolutions in Russia and had met all the leading Bolsheviks. During the last war the Czech Maffia was the most efficient of all the secret organizations and provided the Allies with invaluable information. It was exhilarating for me to learn how its work was organized, and on this subject Dr. Beneš could be eloquent. He had been head of the cypher school and passport factory and had made more than one dangerous journey abroad to report to Masaryk. When the Police were hot on his tracks and he had to flee the country, he provided himself with the necessary false passport. And this story he will always tell with more pride than he takes in any of his diplomatic triumphs.

To-day in his study at Aston Abbots there hangs to the right of the door a charming picture by Panuška. The autumn sun shines on a small plateau of green grass and firs and silver birches. In these grim times it is a picture which gives me a rare satisfaction. Near by I know there must be a trout stream and, mindful of the golden days I spent in the solitude of the Bohemian country-side, I feel not only the desire but the certainty of return. This landscape is Dr. Beneš's favourite picture. It represents the corner of the historic frontier of Western Bohemia where on a September night in 1915 he made his escape to Switzerland and had to travel through German territory to do so. This hazardous adventure had serious consequences for his wife. As a reprisal the Austrian authorities arrested Madame Beneš and threw her into the women's prison in Vienna where her companions in misfortune were common criminals and street prostitutes.

Eduard Beneš has been singularly fortunate in his married life. To him Madame Beneš has been the ideal companion, understanding in all her ways, ministering to his wants, quietly unobtrusive, retiring in his hours of triumph, but sharing to the full the trials and tribulations he has undergone. She is a very remarkable woman. What is perhaps not known in this country is the fact that she was comparatively well-off, receiving a considerable legacy from a rich aunt. At the beginning of the last war every penny of it was put into the fund for the Czech struggle for independence. During the twenty-five years I have known them both, I have never heard them mention this fact to me or to any one else.

Russia was another subject in which we had a common interest and some information to exchange. In his student days in Paris Beneš had met many of the Russian revolutionaries. Even then he had realized that one day their opportunity would come, and although in 1920 the Bolsheviks were regarded by almost all Europe as outcasts and pariahs and therefore dangerous for a small country to cultivate, he was already registering them in his mind as a possible future asset of security. President Masaryk took much the same view, but I doubt if either of them foresaw that from the men who made the revolution there would arise a great military leader like Stalin.

The years which I spent in Prague coincided with the most successful period of Dr. Beneš's career, and during this period I saw him very often. How he found time to do all he did amazed me. When I first saw him, we spoke French. He could read English but lacked practice in speaking. Yet, with all the other demands on his time, he was working at English strenuously and at Russian as well. He is not what one would call a good linguist. Even to-day, after nearly five years' residence in this country, his English is fluent rather than accurate. He still searches sometimes for the right word, and his pronouncement is imperfect. He enjoys remarkably good

health, but two winters ago I arrived one Sunday at Aston Abbots to find him stiff with pain. I asked him what was wrong. He informed me that he was suffering from '*lum*bago'. The accent, as always in Czech, was heavily on the first syllable, and for a moment I could not understand. Nevertheless, the President has now a fluent working knowledge of five languages with a complete political vocabulary in all of them—a truly remarkable achievement for a man who can never have had time to give more than half an hour a day to his linguistic studies.

It was, however, in diplomacy that Dr. Beneš established his reputation and, incidentally, the prestige of his country. Within five years he was widely recognized as the most knowledgeable Foreign Minister in Europe. He knew the coulisses of Geneva better than any one; in almost every European crisis his advice was sought. He was the doctor who, as Lord Curzon said, always put the patient right. This elevation was perhaps not entirely beneficial to Beneš and to Czechoslovakia. The gods of European diplomacy are jealous gods, and there were nations and their representatives who resented this pre-eminence of Czech efficiency. And yet the pre-eminence was natural. Only Great Powers can afford the risks of ignorance. Small nations dare not. Their ministers must know more than the ministers of the Great Powers on whom their security depends. This extra knowledge is the guarantee of their existence, and the justification of that existence is the fact that during the twenty years between the wars the greatest progress in Europe was achieved in and by the small nations.

During the first post-war decade Dr. Beneš was regarded in many countries as a man who had put all his political money on France. This was only true in so far as the French army then seemed to offer the best guarantee of Czechoslovakia's security. But, where security is concerned, Beneš is the last man to stake everything on one card, and from the first

moment of his taking office he did his best to attract British capital to Czechoslovakia. Although from the beginning the state finances of the Republic were built on strong foundations, this method of approach proved long and difficult. Nor were Dr. Beneš's efforts always understood by his own countrymen who had been accustomed to continental banking and were inclined to chafe under the rigours of the more conservative British system. In due course, however, this policy bore fruit, and the Czechoslovak State Loan, the City of Prague Loan, and the establishment of the Anglo-Czechoslovakian Bank were valuable contributions to the financial consolidation of the Republic. In this work I took some share and, indeed, was induced to transfer myself from the Legation to an interesting but chequered career in the new bank.

I also had a small share in Dr. Beneš's few moments of relaxation. Physical exercise being necessary to mental fitness, he devoted a few hours every week to playing tennis at the British Legation. I partnered Sir George Clerk and, as these matches took place soon after dawn, I often found punctuality easier to achieve by not going to bed at all. Beneš's tennis was, like his languages, more efficient than stylish. He was, however, very fast about the court and played not only with energy but with a keen zest to win. He was more frequently successful than not. In his youth he had been a first-class footballer and was regarded by his countrymen as one of the most promising outside-lefts the country has ever produced. Indeed, love of football was responsible for the only serious dereliction from duty in his life. In his last year at the Gymnasium, where he had a scholarship, he transgressed the rules in order to play for 'Slavia,' then the best team in Bohemia. Unfortunately in one match he broke his leg, lost his scholarship, and did not do so well in his matriculation as he otherwise should have done.

Even as the busiest of Foreign Ministers, he still retained an interest in football. I remember vividly one occasion when

I accompanied Sir George Clerk to a match between Celtic, the famous Glasgow club, and a combined Czechoslovak team. We sat beside Beneš in the stand. The Czechs were then the best footballers on the Continent, and beforehand I had warned my countrymen that they would meet with stiff opposition. They had been soundly beaten in the first match and were determined to have their revenge. Certainly they made a better showing, and twenty minutes before the end the scores were level. Then the Czech crowd began to shout in quick staccato roars: "Tempo, Tempo, Tempo!" These roars produce much the same effect on the Czechs as do the bagpipes on the Scots at Murrayfield. Their players made a supreme effort. The Scots began to fail and to cover their shortcomings by rough play. The Czechs scored a goal, and I knew that we were beaten. The huge crowd cheered itself hoarse and spurred the Czech players to further successes. I looked at Sir George. His silver-grey moustache was trembling with disappointment. For myself I wanted to shout 'Christians awake' or at least, 'Celtic awake.' After all, we were both Scots, and football Floddens are as bitter to us as the real thing. Then I looked at Beneš. There was no trace of emotion in his face. His arms were crossed and his eyes were studying the field with the same concentrated attention that they bring to bear on a treaty. I admired his self-control greatly. I knew that he must be glad, but it was not until much later that I learnt that behind that stolid exterior there is a deep well both of emotion and sentiment.

III

In 1928 I left Prague to return to England and for the next ten years I saw Eduard Beneš only during my spasmodic visits to the Continent. But I shall never forget the last time I saw him in his capital. It was March, 1938, and I had come straight to Prague after witnessing Hitler's triumphant entry into Vienna. By then Beneš had become President, and at

noon on March 17th I went to see him in the Hrad. I was kept waiting for several minutes. From the windows of the ante-room I had a superb view of the ancient city glistening in the frosty sunlight. On the table was a beautifully bound edition of *Hugh Lane and His Pictures* with an inscription by Mr. Cosgrave. Then the President came out to meet me with a wan little smile on his face. He had aged considerably since the previous year. He looked tired and admitted that he was. He was not without hope. As he expounded his views slowly and methodically, he made, as always, the best of things. His nerves were good, but to me his anxiety was obvious. The next evening I spent with Karel Čapek for whom I had a deep and abiding affection. About twenty people were present: deputies, professors, journalists and artists. They plied me with questions about England. What would she do? They made no recriminations, no complaints. Being free to say what I liked, I made no attempt to deceive them with false hopes. In any case the effort would have been unavailing. When I left, Karel gave me autographed copies of his *Bíla Nemoc* and his *Matka,* two plays—the last he was to write—which foretold with prophetic vision what was to happen. He and all the others were quite calm. They knew that Czechoslovakia would be the next victim. And Czechoslovakia would have to fight and Czechoslovakia wanted to fight.

Seven months later the President was in exile. By December Karel Čapek was dead.

IV

The present war was to bring me closer than ever to President Beneš, for in the first month I rejoined the Foreign Office and was appointed Liaison officer with the Czechoslovak Committee in London and, ten months later, British Representative with the Czechoslovak Provisional Government. From that day to this I have seen him at least once a week except when illness has prevented our meeting.

The full story of the Czechoslovak struggle for recognition cannot be told here. For the Czechoslovaks it was a trying period. They could not understand the delay. Yet there were many serious difficulties. During the first year the French Government was opposed to recognition in general and to the President in particular. There were also complicated legal obstacles including the problem of juridical continuity which the Czechoslovaks were most eager to establish. Fortunately they are a patient people, and, as on previous occasions in their history, their patience won a reward which hastiness and over-anxiety might have retarded. During this exacting period the President, ably assisted by Jan Masaryk whose knowledge of English and of the English people was invaluable, pursued his object with dignified perseverance, and my admiration and respect for him have been greatly increased by the nobility of his conduct during these years of exile. He is an optimist by nature. Some people consider him over-optimistic. But exile, once described by Karl Marx as a life of shame and scandal, is the hardest test of character that men can face, and few stand up to it. To the *émigré* optimism is as necessary as his daily bread, and the Beneš type of optimism is always reasoned, even if to some judges the reasoning may seem too wishful. To the President Munich was almost a mortal blow, and at one moment I thought he would not recover from it. But the spiritual strength that is in him pulled him through, and his character and magnanimity have been greatly strengthened by the ordeal. No one will expect him to praise or even forget Munich, but never once during these last four years have I heard a word of personal recrimination fall from his lips. Even by the cynical such forbearance must be regarded as a tribute to his political sagacity.

In those early days of September 1939 I found him living in a little villa, just like scores of others in the same street, in Putney. It was a brittle little house with a tiny bomb shelter in the back garden plot. When the bombing of London

started, my first care was to find him a place in the country. Thanks to the good offices of Anthony Rothschild we were able to obtain a charming manor house at Aston Abbots. A few days after the move the Putney villa was bombed.

One of the previous owners of Aston Abbots was Sir John Ross, the Polar explorer, who discovered that the Eskimos had no word for war in their vocabulary and that it was impossible to explain to them what war is. For all its peaceful surroundings Aston Abbots knows what war is to-day, and here the President does most of his work, receives his ministers and generals, writes his books, prepares his speeches and broadcasts, inspects reports and gives guidance to the underground movement in Czechoslovakia. He is still a mine of information, although the task of gathering it is much more difficult than in the last war when in all the Austro-Hungarian Chanceries Czech clerks were employed and did much of the work.

Recognition of his Government, however, by the Allied nations has been the President's main occupation, and in spite of formidable difficulties the task has now been successfully concluded. As far as this country is concerned, the British Government was the first to come to the aid of the Czechoslovak exiles, to give them a home and to arrange their finances abroad. Although necessarily slow, the pioneer work done by our Foreign Office paved the way for recognition by other countries, and there are few Czechoslovaks to-day who do not recognize with gratitude that the foundations of their future existence were well and truly laid with British help during the difficult years of exile. No greater mistake could be made than to imagine that because the President has signed a treaty with Russia he has become a Pan-Slavist. He may modify his tactics, but he never changes his principles, and to-day as in 1918 he looks to Western Europe and further West across the Atlantic to find a proper balance for the security and independence of his country.

The long struggle for Allied recognition is mostly a story of numerous memoranda and of hope deferred until finally realized. But it has some high lights. The accession to power of the present Prime Minister of Great Britain was celebrated privately by every Czechoslovak both here and in the home country where Mr. Churchill is as great a national hero as he is in Britain. Although the moment was the most critical in our history, Czechoslovak hopes rose high. Nor were they disappointed. Provisional recognition followed within ten weeks of Mr. Churchill taking office.

Another red-letter day was December 22nd, 1940, when Mr. Eden's appointment as Foreign Secretary was announced. I was staying with Jan Masaryk in the country when the news came through at seven in the evening. That night after dinner Jan sat down at the piano and improvised a kind of political potpourri to celebrate the occasion. It began with minor Slav melodies to express the longings of the exiles and the sufferings of their oppressed brothers and sisters in the home country. Then followed some slow halting laments to mark the hesitations of the Allied Governments. Brutally harsh discords denounced the savagery of the German occupation. Then came rippling soft arpeggios to denote rising hopes followed by majestic pæans in praise of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden. The finale was a triumphant riot of patriotic songs beginning with the plaintive Czech hymn 'Where is my Home?' and ending with a medley of 'Annie Laurie,' 'Tipperary' and 'Rule Britannia.' It was a remarkable performance—even for Jan who is a master of this art. The improvised harmonies were brilliant, and the meaning could have been followed by any one without a word of explanation. The President, who keeps a book-mark at the page of Hansard on which Mr. Eden's speech in the Munich debate begins, was also jubilant.

Yet another day which raised Czechoslovak hopes to a feverish height was when the Prime Minister visited the Czechoslovak Army on April 19th, 1941. The great moment

came when the Czechoslovak army, small in numbers but full-throated in vocal power, broke into ' Rule Britannia,' sung in English, in Mr. Churchill's honour. He was visibly moved. That visit was the immediate prelude to full recognition.

The actual ceremony of formal recognition took place on July 18th, 1941, in Mr. Eden's room at the Foreign Office. Only Mr. Masaryk and I were present. The proceedings were informal but almost awkwardly emotional. Mr. Eden was at his best and most natural. I do not know if he realized how heavily charged the atmosphere was or what the occasion meant to Jan Masaryk who had worked so hard for this day ever since Munich. But he did the right thing and went straight to the point with the most friendly informality. Then he handed the note of recognition to Jan and the official communiqué to me. There was a painful silence whilst Jan read the document. At one moment he muttered " Thank God," and I saw the tears start to his eyes. Then he laid down the note and began to thank the Foreign Secretary. But the lump in his throat choked his voice, and Mr. Eden had to help him by turning the conversation to other matters. When we came outside, Jan embraced me warmly on both cheeks. Then we set out to 9 Grosvenor Place to inform Beneš. I made him a little speech in Czech, greeting him officially as President of the Czechoslovak Republic. Then we handed him the recognition note. He sat down to read it without saying a word. He finished it carefully, pointed out a minor error in the last paragraph and then thanked me. There was no visible sign of emotion, but I had watched him while he sat reading with his legs crossed, and I had seen the top leg tremble violently. For me, too, it had been an emotional afternoon. Only a few days before I had agreed rather reluctantly to accept another post, and, although my heart was full, I could not help feeling a little sad. Recognition meant that my work with the President and Jan Masaryk was ended.

V

I still see the President almost weekly. I still find the atmosphere of Aston Abbots stimulating and the house itself one of the most pleasant in which to spend a night. In the early morning I can look out from my window on to the Chilterns. In the grounds there is a little lake with a score of moorhens which soon after daybreak come to feed on a lawn fringed with silver birches. Between the house and the hills there is nothing but green land. The landscape is not unlike that of Tabor, the Hussite capital, where the President had his country home. In this little English village the small Czech community that surrounds the President are greatly liked and respected, and in a district which the devastating hand of war has not yet touched, the villagers regard the Czechs as their special war protégés. Here the Czechs will leave behind them a reputation for cleanliness, fair dealing and scrupulous regard for English law and order. And this fair reputation represents a discipline and self-restraint which do not come easily to exiles and are not to be found in all parts of this island. One day I feel that the President and his wife will look back with kindly thoughts on this English village which has been their enforced home. It will not forget them.

In May of this year the President celebrated his sixtieth birthday. He has never lacked confidence. From the first he never doubted the Allied victory; from the first he predicted that Russia's military strength would astonish the world. Yet there must have been moments when he wondered whether he himself would return, whether his country would not be the sacrificed pawn of a compromised peace. To-day these doubts are gone. Essentially a planner, he has all his schemes worked out for setting the administrative wheels of the Republic going as soon as his country is liberated. He is a far happier man than he was five years ago.

To-day, when he can relax a little more than formerly, there is a story which he sometimes likes to tell. In Prague

there are two main hills: the Hrad, where the Government of Bohemia has always had its seat, and the Vinohrady which was the favourite quarter of the Czech intelligentsia. Both heights command a wide view of the city. During the last war he and his wife lived in a small lodging on the Vinohrady not far from the Church of St. Ludmila and from the villa where Karel Čapek lived. In the summer evenings, the young Beneš, bent on the liberation of his country, used to look up to the Hrad and dream that one day its occupants would again be Czechs. When in 1919 he himself entered into residence in the Hrad in order to prove the dream true, he reversed the process and looked down on his old home in the Vinohrady.

The lot of exiles is hard and, like life itself, their future is always uncertain. In any case prophecy in war-time is the refuge of the foolish. But I shall venture to make one prediction. It is that Eduard Beneš will return to a free Prague, that he will see his two hills again, and that he will once more look down with gratitude and humility from the palace of the Hrad to the small house on the Vinohrady, from which he started the first struggle for freedom. The gratitude will be natural. The humility will be heart-felt, for it has been given to few men in history to have twice saved their countrymen from slavery.

QUINCY WRIGHT
University of Chicago

Dr. Beneš at Chicago, 1939

DR. BENEŠ'S stay at the University of Chicago was remarkable for the dramatic circumstance which brought him there, for the important political developments which he initiated during his stay, for the clear expression which he gave to his political philosophy, and for the education which students, members of the faculty, and citizens of Chicago and the nation gained from his personal conversations, seminars, lectures and radio addresses.

A man of indefatigable energy, he did not limit his activities to Chicago, but during the six months of his stay, made a number of lecture tours to various parts of the country, including a visit to Springfield, during which he laid a wreath on the tomb of Lincoln, and a visit incognito to President Roosevelt at Hyde Park. In spite of these activities he never failed to fulfil his academic duties completely. He proved himself a natural teacher and the fifty selected students who attended his seminar expressed their enthusiasm for his method. They learned a great deal about both political philosophy and contemporary European politics.

Very soon after Dr. Beneš had resigned from the Presidency of Czechoslovakia, following the Munich conference in September, 1938, he was invited to come to the University at the suggestion of several members of the faculty. This move was appropriate, not only because of his recognized scholarly competence, but because Chicago is one of the largest Czechoslovak cities in the world, and because his predecessor as President of Czechoslovakia, Thomas G. Masaryk, had been a professor at the University of Chicago thirty-five years

earlier. (See Edward B. Hitchcock, "I built a Temple for Peace," *The Life of Edward Beneš*, N.Y., 1940, p. 300.)

Dr. Beneš accepted the invitation, arrived at the University in January, 1939, and stayed there until July. Beginning October, 1940, he was appointed professor on an indefinite tenure. Though he arrived in Chicago as a private citizen, he was welcomed by the Czechoslovak community in Chicago as the leader of Czechoslovakia. When Hitler, violating the Munich agreement on March 15th, 1939, occupied all of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Beneš reassumed the effective leadership of his country. The Germans had hoped to take over the Czechoslovak Legation in Washington, but Dr. Hurban, the Czechoslovak Minister, refused to give it up and continued to be received by the United States. Coming to Chicago the Minister formally asked Dr. Beneš to assume leadership in the coming struggle for Czechoslovak independence and offered his services.

Dr. Beneš had already seen that it was his duty to do so, and had sent telegrams to the President of the United States, the Prime Ministers of England, France and Russia, and the President of the League of Nations Council asking them not to recognize Hitler's conquest. On March 19th he made a remarkable "Appeal to the American People" on the University of Chicago radio Round Table. He narrated the history of Czechoslovakia, emphasized the conditions justifying its claim to independence, discussed the policy of the Nazi government as disclosed by its acts, and predicted "that there will be no peace . . . until the crimes that have been committed in Europe are wiped out." He declared that "the independence of Czechoslovakia was not crushed," expressed his determination to continue the fight for the freedom of his people and asserted that "in the approaching battle for the victory of the spirit against the sword the United States has a very great role to play." He concluded with the motto of his nation, "Truth Prevails."

This was not Dr. Beneš's only appearance on the University of Chicago Radio Round Table. Two weeks earlier he had discussed with the two other members of the University of Chicago "The Outlook for Europe," and on June 25th "The Question of Democracy." More recently, on May 30th, 1943, he again appeared on the Round Table to discuss "The Future of Europe."

Dr. Beneš's seminar at the University was attended by fifty selected students and conducted as a discussion group. He was ready to answer all questions in detail and he always encouraged the students to participate, which they did with continuous vigour and interest. All of them felt it a privilege to attend this seminar, and at the end of the year the student body, in accordance with an old custom at Chicago, voted him the most outstanding man at the University for the year.

In addition to his seminar and broadcasts, Dr. Beneš gave two notable series of lectures at the University. Both have subsequently been published. The series of lectures on "Democracy To-day and To-morrow" (New York, 1939) were given at the University and also for the general public in the City auditorium during the winter and spring of 1939. The other series on "The Problems of Collective Security in European Post War Policy" (International Security, W. H. C. Laves, ed. Chicago, 1939) was given at the University in connection with the fifteenth annual institute of the Norman Wait Harris Memorial Foundation. During this institute, Dr. Beneš led several of the Round Table discussions attended by experts in international relations from all over the country.

In these lectures, Dr. Beneš explained the reasons for his faith in the value of democracy, of small nations, and of international organization.

In the lectures on democracy, he traced the rise of democracy since the Middle Ages until its general acceptance throughout Europe after World War I. He examined in detail the criticisms of the peace treaties, that they failed to

apply the principle of national self-determination with impartiality, that reparation demands were excessive, that disarmament was one-sided, that the distribution of colonies was inequitable, and that the League of Nations did not observe its principles in practice. While recognizing that there was some justice in these criticisms and that the propaganda emphasizing them contributed to the crisis of democracy which developed, he, nevertheless, considered that " the meaning and the importance of the World War will be characterized as an advance of democratic, equalitarian, humanistic, and pacifistic spirit as well as the spirit of national and social justice in the history of Europe and the world " (pp. 50–51). The very advances made by democracy, he thought, contributed to the consolidation of all anti-democratic forces around the efforts of the Axis to destroy democracy. Behind the Axis movement was not only dissatisfaction with the treaty, but extreme nationalistic sentiments, conservative class and property interests, and fear of Communism. Communism itself, though it accepted much of the democratic theory, was in its revolutionary tendencies an enemy of democracy. Furthermore, weaknesses in the practice of democracy by many of the new states of Europe, and mistakes in the foreign policy of the great western powers contributed to the decline of democracy during the inter-war period (pp. 60–61).

The League of Nations he regarded as the expression of democracy in international relations and as both a consequence and a necessary instrument of democracy under present conditions of international relations. While the idea of the League could be found in proposals and attempts at international organization since the Amphyctionic League of early Greek history, its actual form and meaning was associated with the urge for democracy of the period which gave it birth (p. 93) and its failure flowed from the same factors that led to the decline of democracy in general. Contributing causes were the inherent conflict between political practices which

frequently required compromises and political principles, the divergencies of interest which interfered with the application of sanctions against aggression, the incomplete commitment of certain members of the League to its principles, and the failure of the great powers to observe their fundamental obligations under the Covenant after 1930 (p. 118ff).

After a skilful analysis of the anti-democratic ideology of Fascism and Nazism, Dr. Beneš interpreted these movements as a necessary phase in the "struggle for humanist universalism, fighting for freedom and the free development of the human personality" (p. 186). He continued, "It is the essential nature and quality of every revolution that it contains in its evolution and in its consequences the elements of the reaction against its own principles and results. . . . It is a social fact that the fight of man for this higher culture and civilization, for this higher degree of freedom and development of human personality, does not go forward in a straight line by peaceful evolution; it does go in social waves" (pp. 186, 187, 189).

Dr. Beneš is no social determinist. He does not see progress as inevitable, but as a consequence of human effort. He has faith that the ideals of mankind will surmount these reactions and that democracy will proceed to a higher level. He expressed the opinion, however, in these lectures, six months before World War II began, that another general war must be expected. "The present Europe, politically, intellectually, morally, is condemned. Dictatorships with all their weaknesses, exaggerations, mistakes, failures, violences, cynicism and barbarism will inevitably come to their collapse. The most probable eventuality is that it will come through a military conflict provoked by the authoritarian states, directly or indirectly; less probable is the eventuality of an interior disruption or a series of revolutions, although that is not excluded. But an exterior clash of some kind would be necessary for it in any case. A progressive, peaceful liquidation,

lasting several years, I consider as almost excluded" (pp. 200–201).

Dr. Beneš's capacity accurately to predict political developments has become proverbial, but his explanations in this lecture indicate that his forecasts have not been guesses but have been based upon profound sociological analysis.

His faith in the continued progress of democracy in spite of occasional set-backs rests upon his belief that statesmanship can progress in wisdom. His discussion of the relation of the science to the art of politics and of the qualifications of persons who aspire to democratic leadership is, therefore, of the greatest practical importance. In proportion as politicians adhere to this ideal he is convinced that his faith in democracy will be justified. "The democratic politician," he says, "stands, then, as a scientist, artist and philosopher, at the crossroads of the present, choosing the way of the future. Not only by information and analysis of the actual situation, but also by virtue of an aim defined in terms of the history of philosophy, by intuition, and by guesswork based on knowledge, he must see what should be his momentary and what his final aim. He should, by his political art, know and understand how far, in what direction and at what price he is allowed, can and should change this or that present state of affairs at this or that moment into future shapes. Or in other words he must be able to recognize what is and what is not possible politically" (p. 205). By this insistence upon continuous adherence to the fundamental thesis of democracy, he distinguishes this ideal of politics from the current German saying: "Politics is the art of the possible" (p. 208).

In the detailed elaboration of the ideal of the democratic statesmen, Dr. Beneš is at his best. Furthermore, the discussion throws light on his own character and motives. He is here writing autobiographically, not consciously, but one can perceive the close relationship between this ideal and his own efforts at self-education and effective political action.

Dr. Beneš's belief in small nations stems from his belief in democracy. He recognizes the economic difficulties of small nations in a world of power politics, the practical difficulties of administration faced by the nations which won independence or expanded their territories after the war, and the disintegrating tendency of doctrines of self-determination and nationalism if pushed too far. He, however, looks upon nations as real sociological entities, in some degree as ends in themselves because the individual can only realize himself within the nation. " The individual," he writes, " as the highest value in social life, must be respected as an end in himself and not as a means. Men, and therefore also nations, are equal: no social class can live at the expense of another; nor must any nation or state live and act as if one were the instrument for the aims of another, since all are equal morally and legally " (p. 115).

The inter-mixture of nationalities in Eastern Europe necessitates, he recognizes, many compromises in the drawing of national boundaries and a solution of the problem of minorities. While for this he favours a recognition of individual freedom and the establishment of a universal Bill of Human Rights (*The Rights of Man and International Law,* Czechoslovak Year Book of International Law, London, March 1942, p. 1ff), he recognizes that in certain cases the " grim necessity of population transfers " may have to be considered. (*President Beneš on War and Peace,* Czechoslovak Information Service, N.Y., 1943, p. 137.)

In the Harris Foundation lectures, Dr. Beneš traced in historical detail the efforts to strengthen the League of Nations during the 1920's. These efforts took the form of developing the implications of the Covenant in the fields of security, disarmament and arbitration, at first through general legislation as in the Geneva protocol of 1924 and after this instrument had failed of ratification, by the piecemeal evolutionary process initiated in the Locarno agreements of 1925. The exposition

of these efforts, in which he played a central part, constitutes historical source material. He clearly indicates the motivations underlying many of the diplomatic documents. While he favoured the method of the Geneva protocol, he wholeheartedly bent his efforts toward the evolutionary method after the protocol had been rejected by the British conservative government. He pays tribute to Prime Minister Briand and feels that his activities in the late 1920's culminating in the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the proposal for a European Union were logical steps in the evolution initiated at Locarno.

The mistakes after the economic depression and the Japanese aggression in Manchuria could, Dr. Beneš is sure, have been avoided. "I very definitely contest the idea that there have not been honest attempts for the peaceful settlement of European problems, very great concessions for Germany, real, honest ideas and programmes for the maintenance of peace, and honest representatives of different states who wished to save peace on the basis of justice—justice which never can be perfect and always must be realized step by step in an evolutionary way, without violence. But I do admit that in the critical moments of the last years there have not been governments sufficiently conscious of their real duties, seeing the real substance of events and understanding the whole European problem. It is simply impossible to settle the most serious European problems by abandoning certain principles or certain nations and through the defence only of the limited national interest of certain states as they conceived them narrowly and selfishly. That is the whole tragedy of Europe. The present failure and tragedy came, and in my opinion a greater tragedy will come inevitably, because of these great and tragic mistakes and failures. The whole moral, political and economic crisis of Europe is just now at the culmination point. The final clash will come sooner or later. I do not know when and in what form. But its inevitability is quite evident to me." (*International Security*, pp. 73–74.)

Since his exposition of his basic ideas in Chicago, Dr. Beneš has applied them to the shifting international scene in a series of addresses in England during 1941–42 (*Toward a Lasting Peace,* Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Information, London, 1942), in the United States during 1943 (*President Beneš on War and Peace,* Czechoslovak Information Service, New York, 1943), and in a number of diplomatic acts. In these more recent addresses he has emphasized the need of active rebuilding of economic life and of democracy in Europe during the transitional period after the war, the need of preserving solidarity among the United Nations, the role of Czechoslovakia as a friend of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and Poland, and the need of believing in the possibility of re-educating the German people by Germans if democracy is to be re-established in Europe. Such education, he thinks, implies the complete elimination of Nazism, the restoration of all territories which the Nazis have taken by threat or force, the disarmament of Germany, the punishment of war criminals, and the contribution by Germany to rebuilding the territories occupied by their armies. It must be made clear, he thinks, that the anti-democratic theory will not work. Reconstruction, however, must look not toward the past but toward the future. (*Ibid.,* 132ff.)

These developments of Dr. Beneš's thought, however, go beyond the Chicago period. That was a period of evaluation of experience and expression of philosophy between great crises of activity. In emphasizing the value to the world of the publications in which his thought was expressed during this period I do not wish to lose sight of the personal influence of Dr. Beneš during his stay at Chicago and of the impression made by both Dr. Beneš and his wife upon the students and the members of the faculty at numerous informal gatherings. Mrs. Beneš's charm and loyalty to her husband's ideals were recognized by all. On social occasions, Dr. Beneš was always

ready to discuss the important events in which he had taken part in an objective spirit. Always unassuming in manner, intellectual in approach, and lucid in exposition, he exemplified the democratic statesman whose qualifications he had expounded in his lectures. His method was detailed exposition without vituperation. The conclusion followed from the facts. While the events of the world—the occupation of his country, the advance of Nazism and Fascism, the weaknesses of the great Western nations—marked the nadir of democracy, his spirit never wavered, his faith in the ultimate triumph of democracy, in the eventual restoration of Czechoslovakia and other small nations and in the more adequate democratic organization of the world remained firm. Truth, he was certain, would prevail.

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The Relation of the Czech Reformation to the Humanistic Programme of President Beneš

I

THE medieval man, no less than his modern descendant, sought good life; that much the two have in common. But in the conception what good life consists of, and the means of attaining it, there exist considerable differences. Speaking generally, and at the risk of over-simplification, it may be said that the medieval man thought in religious—specifically Christian—terms both as to the goal and the means, while the modern man's view tends to be secular, eudæmonistic if not hedonistic, in the sense that his goal is conceived in this-worldly terms and the means he employs are naturalistic, scientific, or humanitarian. In short, the medieval man dreamed of the Kingdom of God, while the modern busies himself with the Kingdom of Man.

Nevertheless, there is fundamentally more continuity between the two world-views than superficially meets the eye. That modern view which we call humanistic has retained a great deal of the Christian, although its dependence upon the latter is not always acknowledged, and sometimes it is emphatically denied. Refusing all dogmatic formulations of its assumptions, the modern humanists nevertheless derive their view from their undeclared, but none-the-less real, Christian presuppositions. For their view shares with the Christian the faith in the spiritual foundations of our world, assuming as ultimate realities reason, truth, justice, righteousness and other spiritual verities. The very notion of a historical goal, "the far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves," of

the meaning of history, is derived only from the Judæo-Christian tradition. The Greeks did not have it: for them history was a succession of cycles and human destiny was ruled by fate. The Oriental civilizations are likewise a-historical: the idea that humanity is developing toward a spiritual goal is essentially Christian. And although the modern humanist, trained in the sceptical, Descartian approach to knowledge, and in the Lockean empiricism, is reticent about committing himself to a wholehearted Platonic affirmation of the primacy of the spiritual over the material, or to other metaphysical creeds, and prefers to profess agnosticism in matters of the ultimate meaning of life, yet his actions speak louder than his words: for in practice he rests his humanistic programme of creating a just and good world upon the assumption that justice and goodness do really exist and are realizable. Moreover, unwilling though he be to commit himself in theory, in practice he is bold to devise means to attain his ideal ends. But this is only translating in action the faith of a Christian in a personal God who is truth, goodness, justice and righteousness, and above all is love.

The humanist likewise shares with the Christian the faith in the supreme value of man. It is not by accident that the non-Christian and non-humanistic world views reject such a faith. For as Dostoyevsky has shown in his starkly realistic novels, without faith in God one cannot believe in man. Nazism and fascism subordinate human units to the state. Under their regimes man is exploited in the interests of society or the State, either as cannon-fodder or as an industrial robot. His mind is dominated by propaganda as well as his body by compulsory methods. This is strictly logical: for human personality has no intrinsic, transcendent value. The materialistic philosophies likewise value things above men. To a Raskolnikov, all things are permitted; a Stavrogin, unable to distinguish between good and evil, and without capacity to believe in any ideal or to love anything or anybody, destroys

himself and all with whom he comes in contact. Although superficially it sometimes appears that the humanist, because of his verbal repudiation of the medieval world-view and his ardent modernism, is closer to the spiritual nihilist than to the Christian, the appearance belies the reality: actually, the humanist shares the faith of the Christian in the potentialities and the perfectibility of man. In fact, he shows greater faith than the Christian, for as every religious person knows, it is harder to believe in man than in God. For man, in his spiritual immaturity, must be judged not by what he is at present, but by what he is to become. As Browning put it, "Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be." This is why Christianity has placed such great value upon man, even the worst and the most debased, because it sees in him the unrealized potentialities, and because it believes that ultimately, in his spiritual maturity, he may become Christ-like.

The belief in democracy rests upon similar faith in man, and wherever this high estimate of human potentialities is absent, or where a certain degree of spiritual or moral maturity has not been reached, democracy is not possible. Dr. Charles E. Merriam, formerly head of the department of political science at the University of Chicago, acknowledges that democratic way of life rests ultimately upon faith which is essentially religious. For belief in democracy is fundamentally belief in the common man—and such belief cannot be the result of a strictly scientific approach but of faith. As far as the means are concerned, again the two world-views are closely analogous. Democracy believes in liberty, education, peaceful persuasion, equal opportunity to all. But this is the programme of essential Christianity, although clericalism has often diverted it to other ends and means.

Accordingly, we conclude in this preliminary statement of our thesis that modern humanism is a secularized form of the Christian world-view, accepting and acting upon, perhaps unconsciously, the fundamental Christian assumptions both as

to the goals and the means. No attempt is made here to disguise that real and far-reaching differences do exist. But this is not the place to trace and evaluate their divergent tendencies. Our interest is centred upon the fundamental continuity of the two world-views.

II

An excellent illustration of this process of historical change which may be clearly discerned in the "spiritual climate" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is to be found in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. When the Puritans established themselves in New England, they intended to set up on the rocky shores of the American land an ideal state. To them such an ideal necessarily took the form of theocracy—the rule of God on earth. They knew what they wanted, they believed to be right, and did not intend to allow any one to interfere with their work. They were intolerant on principle, as all men who believe that they exclusively possess the truth are; for tolerance of error was no virtue in their eyes. The society they organized had two foci: Church and State. Both were of divine appointment. Accordingly, the State was not to be dominated by the Church, as is often mistakenly affirmed: for Calvinism accepted both as divinely ordained within their respective realms, and each had its proper function which the other could not perform and with which therefore it must not interfere. The State was set up for the purpose of governing the temporal realm as the Church was ordained to exercise its proper spiritual function in its own sphere. The two formed a unity as man is composed of body and soul, yet each had its distinctive function to perform. Consequently the magistrate was as much under obligation to carry out the will of God in the duties of his office as was the minister in the discharge of his spiritual functions. This is not meant, however, to deny that interference of one or the other partner in the sphere of his neighbour did not occur: after all, Church and State were

not separated, but formed two distinct entities within the one society. It is for that reason that franchise was restricted to Church members alone—and since early New England churches were composed exclusively of those who had made profession of Christian experience, the numbers were surprisingly small, a mere fraction of the total community: for they alone professed submission to the will of God. To the Puritans' way of thinking—no matter how intolerant or undemocratic it may seem to us in our day—it was a *reductio ad absurdum* to profess setting up a theocracy and then to grant franchise even to those who made no pretence of submitting their wills to the sovereign will of God. For obviously, the "unregenerate" would use the franchise to gain through it the realization of their own selfish desires, not the common good, and least of all the will of God. The Puritan reasoned that the sum total of professedly selfish desires did not add up to the Kingdom of God.

But in the next century an entire "change in the intellectual climate" is clearly discernible. The Descartian rationalism, Deism, and the Lockean empiricism were largely responsible for the change. The latter particularly, with its emphasis upon natural rights of man, and the freedom of religious belief from governmental interference was influential in this regard, if not altogether normative. These emphases produced in America, as they did elsewhere, demand for political rights which led here to the Revolutionary War, and in the religious sphere to the demand for the abolition of state churches and the separation of church and state. Thus Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine—the representatives of the dominant American thought of the post-Revolutionary era—by comparison with men like John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, Increase and Cotton Matther—illustrate the startling change which had taken place in the dominant thought currents in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

III

But when we consider the character of the Czech Reformation, particularly its flowering stage in the Unity of Brethren, we are confronted at first with a much more radical formulation of the church-state relationship, although it was later modified in the direction of the generally Calvinistic view described above. The spiritual father of the Unity, Petr Chelčický, repudiated the state altogether and refused to have any active dealings with it, save those of passive obedience in matters lawful. In his best known work, *The Net of Faith,* written in the early forties of the fifteenth century, so that in our day we are commemorating the semi-millennium of its appearance, Chelčický pronounced the historic Christian Church as utterly corrupt. The cause of this loss of spiritual purity he found in the Church's union with the State since the days of Emperor Constantine. The absolute *sine qua non* of its reformation was a radical and thoroughgoing programme of separation of Church and State such as has rarely, if ever, been advocated in similarly uncompromising terms. Only a total repudiation of the compromise effected in the days of Constantine could bring health and purity to the Church. Since the Christian is subject to the supreme law of love, he cannot participate in the rule of force. He does not need to be constrained by coercive measures to refrain from doing harm to his neighbour, for love more than fulfils all requirements of law. Consequently, everything based on compulsion which—like poison—has entered the Church since the days of Constantine, must be removed from the Church, which deals in spiritual concerns and by spiritual means alone. For a Christian, the State is superfluous.

On the other hand, the State, which rests upon force and compulsion to preserve order and protect life and property among those not voluntarily under the restraints of the law of love, is to that extent evil, although it is a necessary evil. Consequently, although the Christian passively submits to the

impositions and requirements for conscience sake—provided they do not explicitly contradict the law of God—yet he cannot participate in any of its functions. This includes not only the repudiation of war and the refusal of army service, but non-participation in any State office in any capacity which might involve the Christian in responsibility for the exercise of force. As the consistent members of the Unity of Brethren attempted to carry out this programme of being in the world but not of the world, they likewise found commerce and many trades as conducive to participation in the secularized world order; in the end they engaged in agriculture by preference, for this occupation gave them the best opportunity to 'keep themselves unspotted from the world.'

But the Brethren proved no exception to the common experience of those groups throughout Christian history which strove to realize the perfectionist, utopian ideal of Christian life. All such groups, governed by legalistic interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount, failed to perpetuate themselves in force. As small communities they often exercised a beneficial influence on the main group of ordinary Christians who tended to succumb to the ever-present lure of compromising too greatly with the worldly standards; but they have never gained sufficient influence to determine the course of events—for on principle they renounced the world. Consequently, the second and third generation of the Unity already modified their original intransigent attitude toward 'the world,' as indeed this development could have been expected from the first. With the influx of the educated and the more well-to-do, not to speak of the wealthy, for the Unity attracted even the members of the nobility, the change set in. This is not to be bewailed as a betrayal of the Christian ideal, but only as the gradual understanding of the implications of the Christian life in relation to the society at large. Instead of running away from society and repudiating the State, the Brethren came to look upon themselves as the leaven, the *raison d'être* of which is that it permeate the whole loaf.

Such certainly were the views of the Unity in the days of John Amos Comenius. Not that he was less zealous than the early leaders of the Unity for the realization of the Kingdom of God; but he understood the conditions under which its development takes place more realistically. To be sure, he shared with the early Unity the conviction that the truest happiness, the real spiritual freedom cannot be found in 'the labyrinth of the world,' but only in 'the paradise of the heart.' For in this mystical insight Comenius reasserted the immemorial basic conviction of the mystics of all ages and nations, as well as the radical other-worldliness of the Unity of Brethren. But he did not for that reason repudiate the State: it performs God-appointed functions in an unredeemed society which are essential to the measure of order and civilization which humankind is able to attain on the basis of its natural powers alone. As such, the State performs useful and valuable service on its own level, although the highest stages of human development are not within the scope of its functions or possibilities. In general, he shared with the Calvinists the view that Church and State are both ultimately subject to divine direction, although one operates in the spiritual, the other in the temporal realm. When Comenius addressed his "*Angelus pacis*" to the English and Dutch Ambassadors gathered at Breda in 1667 in order to conclude a peace treaty which would terminate the war raging between the two nations, he assumed throughout this most political of his writings that he is dealing with Christian nations. His arguments are predominantly religious. To us moderns, accustomed to think about political matters in secular terms, Comenius' presuppositions appear almost ludicrously naïve. But just because of that there can be no doubt that to him as well as to men of his age the State was subject to the divine laws; and hence ultimately had to consider its actions as much "*sub specie aeternitatis*" as the Church did. Consequently, it could not trim morality to suit its own conveni-

ences; it must deal with other nations in accordance with a recognized and developing code of ethics; and it must recognize the natural rights of its citizens and cannot violate their consciences or liberties. The aim of the State must be a good world in the moral sense of the word, as the goal of the Church is the bringing in of the Kingdom.

IV

The Age of the Enlightenment, culminating in the French Revolution, turned men's minds from the theocentric to the humanistic world-view. This was the triumph of the Renaissance, which Berdyaev defines as the affirmation of the distinctly humanistic tendencies—beginning with the æsthetic in the early Renaissance, passing to the religious in the Reformation period, then political in the era of the French Revolution, and lastly economic since the days of the Industrial Revolution. It was for political freedom that the American Revolution was fought, and Europe was permeated during the first half of the nineteenth century by the same desire to throw off the shackles of the past. Humanism of František Palacký combined the ardent patriotism of a Czech desiring the liberation of his country with the aspirations of a world-citizen who desires the good of all mankind. President Masaryk likewise was a vigorous exponent of the humanistic philosophy, but early arrived at the conviction that such view of life must have a religious foundation. In this he differed from other exponents of humanism who either believed that their goal can be reached by means wholly within the capacity of natural human powers or felt no need of the religious dynamic, or who were even actively opposed to religion, identifying it with the politically and intellectually stultifying forces of clericalism.

President Beneš is an outstanding and typical exponent of modern humanism. Although his world-view rests upon religious assumptions, for he is too clear-minded not to have perceived the essential unity of the Christian and the human-

istic philosophies, he has not integrated it into a religious framework in a formal exposition, as Masaryk had done. But if his views rest upon religious assumptions, these assumptions are nevertheless real. Having received a strictly Catholic religious upbringing at home, he later was attracted—like the vast majority of university students—toward positivism and materialism. But Masaryk " continued to harass me by his destructive analysis of everything in positivism which I had regarded as philosophically sound," as he himself confesses. His visit to England early in life, and the first-hand acquaintance with the English religious life " led me to the study of philosophy and theory of knowledge, and also to an anti-positivist change of views on religion." That is as close as Dr. Beneš has come in describing his attitude toward religion. Otherwise, according to his biographer, Eduard B. Hitchcock, " he has always refused to discuss it, on the score that it is too personal a topic. He never asks another man about his religious beliefs. And he never answers about his own."

He has devoted his life to the building of a democratic State. He believes in a free Church in a free State. When dealing with the war policy of Pope Benedict XV in *My War Memoirs,* he formulated his attitude toward the Church as follows: " The conclusion which this inevitably brings me is, that religious and ecclesiastical matters in general should be excluded from politics. The only possible solution of the problem of the Church in modern democratic States is the return of the Papacy to the spiritual mission which it followed in the early period of Christianity, and a free Church in a free State." Certainly it is not difficult to discern in this attitude the continuity between the emphases of Chelčický and Comenius on either the exclusive or primary spiritual character of the function of the Church and President Beneš's humanistic programme.

The objectives which he proposes for the attainment of his democratic state-building are also inspired by the Christian

tradition: justice toward all citizens irrespective of nationality or creed; fair dealings with other nations; opposition to war except for defence; establishment of peace, European and world-wide, in which cause his contributions are of no mean order; economic improvement of the underprivileged classes; equal educational opportunities for all; a high cultural national standard; and last of all, an unconquerable faith that good shall ultimately prevail.

From these concrete policies of his honest statesmanship from which he has never deviated, and which could be proved to be his guiding principles by scores of illustrations, it is not difficult to discern the close spiritual relation of President Beneš's humanistic world view and the fundamental principles of the Czech Reformation. He is sustained by faith in assumptions which to the Reformers were spiritual verities apprehended by religious faith. Accordingly, his programme is linked up by the hidden, but nevertheless real, historical continuity with the best in the tradition of the Czech Reformation. More than that, his humanism is the secularized form of the Christian world-view of all ages.

FELIX WELTSCH

A Critical Optimist

(An essay on Edward Beneš as philosopher)

SOCRATES is rightly regarded as the prototype of a philosopher, though he left no philosophical works behind, and though the topics of his dialogues covered but a small portion of the big philosophical problems. Nevertheless he lived, and what is more he died, as a philosopher.

We call a philosopher not only a man who writes a philosophical treatise but above all a man who lives and acts as behoves a philosopher, that is to say anybody whose attitude and conduct in life are based on a *philosophical outlook* resulting from a philosophical *method*. Such a man does not view the problems and events of his time and of life around him as isolated phenomena, but as part of a whole; he does his utmost to fathom their meaning, uncover their very last mutual connections and build up his general outlook on life. Once he has achieved that, he will live his life true to that basic philosophy from which he will derive the principles of his actions, regardless of the time-bound appearances and the needs of the moment. It is a very simple principle by which he establishes the connection between his actions and his philosophy. The principle of Truth! He desires to see the events of the day as they *really* are, not misshaped by prejudice and unfalsified by illusion; only this way of reasoning gives the philosopher a chance to establish a truthful connection between the actual events and their metaphysical foundations. It appears therefore that three principal elements constitute a philosophical mind: a general *outlook* striving to grasp the last inter-connections of the phenomena of life; secondly preparedness *to act in accordance with the principles* rooted in

that outlook; thirdly, *truthfulness as a method* in both judgment and action.

If we contemplate the principles and methods manifesting themselves in the actions of Dr. Edward Beneš, the statesman, and if we view them not only from the angle of an objective onlooker, but also in the light of Dr. Beneš's own statements and writings, we shall eventually reach the conclusion that the definition just coined by us for a philosopher in general is particularly true in respect of Dr. Beneš.

There exists hardly a statesman, and hardly a philosopher, in whom philosophy and politics would have so intimately merged into a harmonious unity as we find in Dr. Beneš. That unity is, as it behoves a philosopher, not only of an objective nature; it is above all subjective, as it pervades Dr. Beneš's consciousness. He realizes perfectly well to what extent his political way embodies his philosophy, and to what extent politics have become philosophy. In his writings, Beneš often defines politics as political philosophy; his method, however, in political action, he calls with preference 'noetic.' The latter term, as Beneš uses it, is not completely identical with that known from the Theory of Knowledge. It simply implies the general constant endeavour to get to the bottom of things by way of reasoning.

"I have always been consciously dealing with political problems in a scientific way"—he admits himself (in his book *The World War and Our Revolution*—Prague 1927)—"I have always been endeavouring, consistently and systematically, to apply to political problems, philosophical and scientific methods, and this is largely responsible for the measure of success I achieved during the War (the First World War) and later."

Beneš has never deviated from that principle, as can also be seen in his latest book *Democracy—To-day and To-morrow*":*

* The quotation is extracted from the Czech edition *(Demokracie, dnes a zitra)*.

" Politics are and must be philosophy, and the statesman must be a philosopher as well " (p. 206).

Thus in his own words he assigned to philosophy a central place in his political actions.

Philosophy has always constituted the sound foundation of his politics. What Beneš once said of Masaryk is true of himself:

" Masaryk was a philosopher, intent on understanding the world with a view to being able to apply in practice the principles of the knowledge acquired. His philosophy originated not only from the interest he took in the realities of life, in science and thought, but first of all from his endeavour to beware from errors in his public, social and political activities." (*Sociologist, Moralist and Practical Politician-Social Review*, VII.)

One can, therefore, safely say: " The actions of Beneš, the statesman, have always been based on the general outlook of Beneš, the philosopher."

To-day Dr. Beneš is again one of the men who are preparing the organization of the new post-war order to be set up in the world. During the First World War he was one of the founders of the Czechoslovak State. To-day, during the Second World War, he is again the builder of his country's independence. In the inter-war period he was for many years Foreign Minister and then President of the Czechoslovak Republic. Fate willed that he should be the first to be made to suffer the heavy blow administered to the world by Hitlerite Germany. Owing to his philosophical training, Beneš became one of the first to realize the true nature of the disastrous policy conducted by Nazi Germany.

In order to be able to form a proper judgment on Beneš's policy, *one must try to get a proper idea of his philosophy.*

The author of the present essay regards it as his task to expound that philosophy that has been guiding Dr. Beneš in all his political actions.

Dr. Beneš has not put down in writing any philosophical system. But each of his very numerous speeches, essays and historical-political books clearly shows him to be a philosopher, and can be used as a source conveying an idea of his philosophy. Therefore, if we desire to show the outline of Beneš's general outlook, we shall have to derive its principles from the views laid down by him in his writings, and from the rules of his thoughts and actions. It is along the thoughts outlined in Beneš's writings and speeches that we shall be able to penetrate into the very centre of his philosophy. It is the existence of such a focus that matters. *What generally characterizes a philosophical outlook is that there is in it a central focal point from which all particular views and actions derive their significance and strength.*

It is that unity, that comprehensive linkage, that original centre of Dr. Beneš's outlook that we shall be trying to expound. Once we have detected it, all individual views and actions will reveal themselves in the proper light of their intrinsic unity, that is to say in their truly philosophic nature. They are no longer accidental, but part of a comprehensive unity. Each of them has its peculiar significance originating from the harmonious outlook of a philosophical mind.

With a view to detecting that linkage, it is necessary to find the essence out of its actual manifestations. For methodical reasons, it will then be easier to proceed in the *opposite* direction. We shall, therefore, have to find the nucleus of Beneš's outlook and then to show the harmony prevailing between that central point and the radiation emanating from it towards the perimeter, and shedding the proper light on all individual actions of that personality.

It is this method that we intend to apply in our essay.

How can we find the nucleus of the philosophical outlook of an individual? And where can it be found?

The innermost nature of any philosophy manifests itself in

the way in which the individual concerned reacts to that most universal '*question of confidence*' which the world puts before each of us: Is the individual concerned an optimist or a pessimist in the widest sense of that word? What is his place on the scale ranging from pessimism to optimism?

We do not speak of course here of confidence in respect of any definite case, but of confidence in respect of *the general course of events*. This is no personal question, but one of religious nature; it is one could even say the religious question, since religion in its essence is but the reply to the most general question of confidence. What matters is, whether one is prepared to adopt an attitude of confidence and to react with unreserved faith in Life and World to the confusing and bewildering onslaught of events in the external world.

We are speaking here of a *question of confidence* and not of just a question. We wish to make plain that the reply to it can only be venturesome, that is to say, lying beyond the scope of certainty which is otherwise indispensable for the acquisition of knowledge. Whether the reply to that primary question can be termed as 'faith,' as a 'thesis' or as a 'hypothesis,' it always involves a bestowal of confidence, and is in some way a jump into the reign of venture. Our decision to grant confidence is free and universal.

The widest question of confidence is put before us by the universe. The confrontation of a human being with the world creates very soon a number of distinct primary questions which, in their turn, produce the primary questions occupying the human mind: The search for Truth, for Morality, for God. These three most important domains of philosophical thought constitute the origin of Knowledge, of Ethics and of Metaphysics or Religion.

Also these basic domains of philosophical thought must be conceived in their widest scope. The problem of *Truth* contains the questions: What is Truth? Can we rely at all on our faculty to acquire the knowledge of Truth? Is what we

believe to be true *really* true? Does there exist an external world? Or is all or part of what we believe to be real no more than an illusion? Does there exist a world of ideas, and do these ideas, as Plato says, represent genuine Truth, or are they, as others maintain, mere fictions? In all these partial problems of the Theory of Knowledge, the question of confidence has obviously essential significance. All those problems are in fact questions of confidence.

The same is true of the problem of Morality. What can be termed as good? What is the criterion of the Good? How do we know in what way to act? Can we rely on our experience in the discernment of the Good? Is what appears to us to be of value really valuable? Are we in reality intent on the satisfaction of our desires, and do we perhaps only imagine to be able to strive for real values? Are there values at all or are they only assumptions? Are the values absolute, sacred for all times, and free from any connexion with us and our valuation, or are they only sacred under certain circumstances, and in certain periods, that is to say, are they perhaps only of a subjective and of a relative nature, and can they only be explained in the light of their historical evolution? All these fundamental problems of ethics are again distinctly questions of confidence.

Questions of confidence are also the primary questions arising in the field of Metaphysics and Religion. We have before us a search for the meaning of the whole. Do the events devolve according to plan, and is there any reason in their course? Is there a tremendous spiritual force that directs them towards a definite goal? Are all events in both Nature and History governed by Reason, and is their course a line of progress, or is it a monstrous play of Chance, in which only part of the events happen to harmonize with one another. Is the whole a blind aimless flow of events or is it perhaps an eternal repetition of itself? Does there exist Providence? God? And if so, how can we explain the existence of the Evil?

These, too, are questions of confidence to which the reply can be either in the affirmative or in the negative or somewhere between. There is a wide range of positions lying between optimism and pessimism. The whole of the history of philosophy and of the religious systems is but a somewhat disorderly register of these ways of reaction. It seems to me, however, that all these replies to the question of confidence can be classed in four categories containing the replies given by mankind to the primary question of confidence and to its three main sub-categories representing the search for Truth, for the Good and for God.

The first reply given is: Yes. An unreserved, naïve Yes! *What we believe to be true, is true.* There exist real values and *we are well able* to grasp them and partake of them. There also exists an Almighty, Merciful, Omniscient God who directs the course of events in the world and who sees to it that the righteous are happy and the wicked are punished.

This reply, which could be understood as emanating from Naïve Optimism, constitutes the nucleus of many great types of outlooks on life or of types of religions. To this class belongs, within the range of the Theory of Knowledge, the so-called Naïve Realism which places full confidence in our ability to acquire knowledge, and accepts the external world as real, just as it is perceived. But also, Naïve Idealism, the opposite direction is in fact Naïve Optimism, since it believes the world of ideas to be real. In the religious field, the naïve belief of the positive religions belong to the same group. But also Positivism is Naïve Realism, particularly so as it does not become aware at all of its standpoint of resignation in respect of questions lying beyond. In the reign of ethics, Naïve Optimism assumes that there exists an ethical way of action which harmoniously fits itself into the structure of the world. Mostly it finds the criterion of the Good either in divine orders or in an innate Sense of Morality. The great conflicts of ethical nature and the tragic contrasts in our existence appear,

in the light of Naïve Optimism, to be a mere semblance which, at a closer approach, proves to be a manifestation of harmony. In fact, events both in human life and in nature are linked harmoniously with each other. The Cosmos is harmonious and perfect.

The antithesis of the outlook just described is that of Pessimism. Instead of saying 'Yes,' the pessimist replies to the question of confidence with a very distinct No! He does *not* place confidence in the flow of events in the world. He does *not* 'believe.' His negative reply is to be found in all partial domains of the question of confidence. In the Theory of Knowledge, such an attitude is called sceptical, that is to say, expressing a general, all-pervading doubt.

What is truth? There exists *no* truth, since there exists no certainty in acquiring definite knowledge and *there can be none*. Much of what we believe to be true has already proved to be but an illusion. We never know how far illusion reaches. We are unable to place confidence in our ability to acquire knowledge, since there can be no final control beyond our own means of acquiring it. We possess no other means, and we cannot leave the framework of the organization of our knowledge.

In the religious domain, pessimism mostly takes the shape of Atheism: there is *no inner meaning* in the flow of events in our world. A blind will runs amok. There is no planning, no element of reason, and there is no God!

The findings of the pessimist in the domain of Ethics are that man only strives for the satisfaction of his lust. He does what carries with it a greater measure of lust. He is not free, but a slave of his own desires and passions, and *cannot, therefore, be held responsible* for his actions. Values are but fictions. There exist no values at all, and there exists no ethical will. Ethics themselves are, therefore, non-existent.

These are the two opposite poles on the scale ranging between Optimism and Pessimism. Between the 'Yes' of the

Naïve Optimist and the 'No' of the Radical Pessimist, there exists a large number of midway outlooks carrying the usual advantages of midway solutions, as against extremism in the replies to the question of confidence. Let us stress here only two of the most important of these replies as the clearest and maturest expression of that midway point of view: the Critical and the Dialectical.

The Naïve Optimist accepts all that he perceives just as it appears to him, with full unreserved confidence. He does not question anything. With the Pessimist it is quite different. To him there exists neither Truth nor Order. He points to all that is chaotic, evil and misplaced, as well as to all delusions, failures, absurdities and doubts occurring in human life.

Criticism could be termed *as Optimism that has learned a lesson from Pessimism.* It argues: not all of the objections raised by Pessimism against Optimism are wrong; not all of them can be wrong, and there must be some measure of truth in them. Nevertheless, Optimism, the belief in sense and reason, cannot be abandoned. One must only *discern and differentiate* what is delusion and what is not. That outlook we call Criticism, adopting the Greek expression for the action of discerning, κρίνειν. The critical refuses to accept the external world blindly as it is. He is intent on *forming judgment.* He admits: many a time have we already been deceived by what we had believed to be true. Therefore not all is true what appears to us to be true. A safe indication of truth is indispensable. The Critic has then to look out for a criterion with a view to being able to keep asunder Truth from Falsehood, what exists from what appears to be existent, Reality from Illusion. The same way he goes in the field of ethics. Not all objects of our desires are of real value. Mere desire does not yet mean valuation. We must find a criterion to discern the valuable from what we are lusting for. In the religious life it is just the same: here, too, Faith must be kept asunder from Superstition, or in other words, the nucleus of

Religion must be discerned from accidental accretions. If, however, we speak of the meaning of our world, we cannot regard all that we experience in life as meaningful and perfect; there is much to be done yet. A *good deal* depends on our own actions. *Values must be given reality.* That realization obviously *depends on ourselves* to a larger or lesser extent. *Thus the Critical Optimist detects the part of human action in the planning of our world.* All that exists, must not be simply accepted as it is. It is our duty to *exert influence.* If we act in accordance with ethics, then we serve the Good. Providence is existent, and our world moves forward, but we must collaborate in the direction of that forward movement. Then Mankind and the World will be making steady progress towards the Good. Not all in our world is in perfect order yet, but there exists a steady flow towards such an order, and it is worth while moving in that direction. Progress is existent. All that is Critical Optimism.

Dialectical Optimism represents a further evolution of Critical Optimism. In one decisive point it draws nearer the pessimistic outlook than Critical Optimism does. It does not presuppose the necessity and the finality of the solution of all problems between God and Man, and between Nature and Man, but finds significance in the striving for such a solution.

Dialectical Optimism has far too deeply penetrated into the tragic ethical conflicts of Man. Too seriously does it view the contrast between Nature and Spirit, Biology and Humanity. It knows too much about the pain of finality suffered by him who strives for infinity. It is, therefore, unable to form the belief in a possibility, harmoniously to solve all these contrasts by simple discernment (Criticism), by harmonious collaboration between Nature and Man, or by the mere development of all innate dispositions of Man. The Dialectical Optimist knows that all solutions of primary problems, of those problems that are closely interlaced with the primary contrasts (Static Existence and Growth; Nature and

Spirit; Freedom and Necessity; Finality and Infinity; Rest and Movement, etc.)—are only temporary, and that following each solution found, the old contrast rises again in a new shape and possibly on a higher plain.

Nevertheless, he recognizes the meaning of all that striving for solution, certainty and unity, though there exist no such things as solution, certainty and unity. He perceives creative progress, despite the unattainability of a final goal. He knows that there exists creative work, and he has noticed that often it finds realization in a direction different from that originally intended. *Creation,* too, *is a by-effect of the human striving for the Unattainable.*

The Dialectical Optimist recognizes the flow of progress, though he knows that the inner contrast in human existence neither admits a final solution of these contrasts, nor any kind of finality or perfect certainty. This is true in all fields of human endeavour in the search for Knowledge, for Value, for Happiness and for God Himself. Yes, even *in the idea of God,* shaped by the philosophical conception of the Absolute, he perceives an anthropomorphous admixture that cannot be done without. Nevertheless the endeavour to achieve a union of the unsolvable contrasts is not devoid of meaning. On the contrary, the Dialectical Optimist recognizes that only by that striving for Eternal and Perfect Existence, for the Absolute, for God and towards God, final progress is possible altogether. Thus a new internal dialectical contrast arises between the necessary transcendental tendency of the spirit and the recognition of the equally necessary failure. That contrast, however, becomes tolerable and even fruitful, since we know that just that is the creative way. A result of that position of Dialectical Optimism are the Dialectical Ethics.

It may be distinctly stated: Dialectical Optimism, too, is a midway point of view; however, it represents a most significant outlook, reaching beyond the scope of Critical Optimism. The Dialectical Optimist believes in the reasonable

planning, in the progress and in the spirit, though he does not accept the view that mankind is able to reach a stage in which all human endeavours would find their final harmonious fulfilment. This is no optimism in respect of the goal, but optimism in respect of progress. It is an optimism of action. It is no optimism of static existence but one of growth.

What has so far been expounded, only had the purpose to build *the frame*, in which to give an outline of Edward Beneš's philosophy. I shall be trying to draw it in as few strokes as possible. Since all main key points have been assigned their places in the above constructed framework of the human outlook on life, it may be possible to achieve that by letting Beneš speak just from these keypoints. From what we shall hear him say, we shall be able to build up and clarify to ourselves Dr. Beneš's political-philosophical system. One admirable feature deserves particular attention: the actuality of Dr. Beneš's thoughts and formulas, and the *philosophical and political* flair by which Beneš boded the approaching storm. Many passages in his confessions and admonitions almost strike us as prophetical.

Dr. Beneš's philosophical standpoint is very distinctly the outcome of Critical Optimism. This is most distinctly shown in the concluding words of his book: *The Revolt of the Nations*":

"The world events have led me to optimism, to a sober combatant, national and social optimism based on the realities of life, and inspired by a creative spirit, an optimism which overcomes pain and injustice, and stimulates the spirit to an utmost constant effort enlightened by idealism."

But he remains an optimist even after the development of world events had brought him most bitter disappointment. In his book *Democracy To-day and To-morrow*, he remains the critical optimist that he has always been. He says there: "Those people and that society who without being prepared

to concessions, indefatigably carry on the fight against brutal force in support of the spirit and its ideals, give expression to true objective and realistic optimism. This is, in truth, the right conception of the development of mankind and of happiness in the human existence" (p. 253).

In the conclusion of his book, Beneš says: "Humanitarian Democracy is a system which regards as possible the improvement of human society mainly by the improvement of the individual. . . . This is why Democracy is in its nature optimistic. It makes life worth living, despite all misery in human life."

This optimism to which Beneš has always remained faithful pervades all fields of Beneš's philosophy; it appears in his theory of knowledge, his religion, his ethics and, first and foremost, in his political activities. We begin with the question of *Religion.*

"Since my earliest youth, my mind was kept busy and worried by the religious problems . . ."—he starts. He draws the conclusion:

"My inner struggle for a philosophical outlook, the study of the works of Kant, Hume, Descartes and Masaryk have eventually induced me to adopt, towards the religious problem too, a *positive* attitude. Thus I have formed steady views in the religious field, accepting at the same time the faith in immanent Teleology and in Providence of Fate." (*The World War and our Revolution*—1927.)

"Faith in Providence and in an immanent Teleology"—that means faith in the reasonable organization of our world and in the planning of the world events, that is to say, a declaration of confidence to the Universe, an expression of Religious Optimism.

True, this is no blind confidence, no passive *laissez-faire.* Beneš very distinctly refutes the attitude of a fatalist. On the contrary, he is an activist in the best sense of that word. It is human actions that matter. An essential part of historical

evolution depends on action of Man, according to Beneš's conviction. His activist attitude is by no means accidental. To a considerable extent, it is linked with Critical Optimism, a sort of optimism in which the mind descerns the good from the evil in the external world. The Critical Optimist does not accept any human attitude as valuable, but that classed by him as such. Success depends on the collaboration of God and Man. This outlook borders on syncretism professed by Masaryk as well. According to it ethical action means that Man collaborates in shaping the divine world.

It follows from that activist attitude that Edward Beneš's religiosity merges into ethics, and ethics in their turn into politics. It is characteristic how considerable a part Dr. Beneš assigns, in ethics and above all in politics, to the faculty of acquiring knowledge. He goes so far as to describe politics as 'Noetic.' Statesmanship is but *the knowledge of true reality.*

" The political struggle "—Beneš says—" is mainly a powerful wrestle for the knowledge of reality. . . ." And then he proceeds:

" For the philosophical mind it is a struggle by which the philosopher aims at grasping the eternal philosophical problem of true reality. He asks how that true reality could be revealed, what is fact, and what an illusion of this or other human individual, what is exaggeration of an uncritical mind, of a politician or of an uncritical mass, and how one should react to such statements or true facts. Every good statesman must obviously have a fine flair for that philosophical and above all noetical problem, and his mind must be philosophically trained with a view to being able to apply to social and political manifestations the same scientific method of establishing facts, with which every student of philosophy acquaints himself at the very beginning of his studies." (*Problems of a New Europe,* 1934, pp. 233–5, 241–7.)

Beneš's leitmotiv in his political endeavours and actions is Truth, as is the case with every philosophical mind. He

regards the problem of true reality as "the eternal philosophical problem." This is why he sees in the Noetic the basic philosophical discipline. (*Problems of a New Europe,* p. 242.)

The close relation established between politics and truth is typical of Masaryk's political school. It is very significant that Masaryk, the philosopher and statesman, chose as his political motto the device: "Truth Will Triumph!" Beneš's attitude towards Truth is similar.

Beneš says: "Success can only be achieved where honesty and truth prevail; this, however, does not mean that truth can achieve victory by itself. The motto, 'Truth Will Triumph' means that it is our duty to work for Truth, assist it and indefatigably fight for it." (*Conditions of a Successful Life*, 1930.)

This activist interpretation of Masaryk's motto is characteristical for Beneš.

In the lives of both philosophers and statesmen, this love of truth develops into a political method. In fact, they start *a philosophical method in politics.* Both are intent on *establishing the measure of truth* before reaching any political decision. Beneš stresses again and again the importance of establishing facts *before proceeding to any political action.* The study of facts must be followed by a close analysis, and only then the time comes for action. The struggle against illusion and self-deception always used to be the essential part of Masaryk's realism. The underlying principle is: Truth is the best premise of action: Truth towards one's self and truth towards the external world. It is interesting that even the way in which Beneš describes Masaryk's method of a scientific analysis of facts clearly shows how very much he himself supports that method.

In an essay on Masaryk, Beneš writes:

"It is well known that Masaryk's philosophy is based on Noetic. In his political actions, that principle reveals itself in his consistent and steady desire to establish facts without any

embellishments, any romantical or tendentious additions, but pure, frank, genuine, simple facts."

In another passage he says:

"The struggle for facts is the most expressive and most characteristical feature in the personality of Masaryk the statesman. Again and again he resumes that struggle, again and again he calls for facts. In conversation with others he corrects his interlocutor, guiding him to a distinct establishment of the facts, the question discussed, the problem, the task involved or the goal striven for. Again and again he compels him exactly to repeat a conversation, a wish, a question, a statement or the formulation of a problem. Twice or three times he will ask whether this or that information submitted to him is exact, whether it originates from the first hand, whether it has not been inflated by divulgation, how it could be checked and cleaned from its untruthful accretions. Again and again he strove for genuine, purest fact, fact, fact!

"I repeat: Masaryk conducts a real struggle for facts. He reveals himself partly as a methodological and realistical explorer, and partly as a stern guardian of reality, as a noetic . ."

In his last book on democracy *(Democracy To-day and To-morrow)* Dr. Beneš stresses again the importance of knowledge, or rather the importance of truth and science. According to him, in the scale of sciences, sociology ranges highest since it deals with the highest problems of the individual as a member of the human society. "Politics are the practical application of Sociology." This is why politics must be viewed as "Science of Man, revealing all social manifestations, activities, desires, endeavours and feelings" (p. 205).

"Democratic Politics" are in fact a discipline of science. It studies the given relations between Man and Society with the help of all special scientific disciplines. As science, it must objectively contemplate the problems of human society and of the external world generally, and impartially analyse the reign of reality. The statesman must therefore, as a scientist,

be concerned with all political and social disciplines of science, with philosophy, psychology and even with biology. He must have real understanding for scientific methods and particularly for scientific objectiveness, when he undertakes to pass judgment on facts."

" The task of Science is to look for objective truth. This is why Truth must be the most indispensable feature of every Democracy " (p. 209).

This most interesting and almost sensational stressing of the scientific character of politics and the classing of politics as a science, we find in both Masaryk and Beneš. We could regard that view as a further evolution of the Socratic thought that the Good is Knowledge. In this case the ethical thought has been extended to politics.

Beneš has clearly defined his position with regard to *the Theory of Knowledge.* He calls himself a Critical Realist and a disciple of Descartes, Kant, Locke, Hume and Masaryk. Critical Realism in metaphysics, sociology, psychology and politics is the leitmotiv of his political life.

It is René Descartes, the greatest Critical Realist, who is his favourite philosopher, and to the study of whom Beneš, the statesman, too, devotes much of his time.

Beneš regards the ethics as a foundation of politics. More than that: to him *ethics and politics are identical.* In a democratic system there can be no strife between politics and ethics. In such a system the view can never be accepted that a non-ethical political act, a political deception or a lie can be justified with patriotism or with the interests of the people or of a party." *(Democracy—To-day and To-morrow,* page 210.*)*

Thus the principles of *Democracy* are according to Beneš of a moral nature:

" (a) In a democracy, the personality of the citizen, the freedom of thought and conviction, of faith and religion, and the result following from that freedom, namely the right of the

citizen to cultivate his national language and his national culture, must be fully and consistently respected."

"(b) In a democracy the citizen must know the truth, and must be free to give expression to it and defend it. Science, as the expression of impartial objectiveness and truth, must be respected. Tolerance must be the practice in matters of faith and religion, of science and culture, of political or personal conviction. Such tolerance must be regarded as one of the main characteristics of a mature, democratic and dignified type of man."

"(c) A given promise must be kept. The same applies to formal undertakings or contracts. Public life, in its entirety, must be based on respect towards voluntarily concluded internal and international agreements."

Dr. Beneš's attitude *within the range of ethics* can be defined as humanitarianism. He describes (in *Souvenir de guerre,* 1st vol., p. 570) the nature of humanitarian morale:

"That morale exacts from us that we should understand how to fulfil harmoniously and fully, the tasks resulting from our duty to love and devote ourselves to our fellowmen, to our country and to mankind generally. That morale teaches us that, while its first principle is truest and most vivid devotion, the second is the duty of most energetic resistance, where the defence of the first principle is necessary. In other words, in all cases, what matters is to ward off the evil with perseverance, constancy and energy without any inadmissible concessions. Humanitarian morale is no weakness! It is the morale of strong, well-balanced men who have the love of the Good in them and a hate, a genuine hate of the evil, of men who know how to live for that love and for that hate, and how to express in actions their love and their hate. Yes, in action! The politically active man who desires to be a wise realizer, and who, by doing so, gives shape to the ideals of his own time and of those of future generations, must know in his daily life how

harmoniously to apply these two principles of love and hate and how to find a powerful synthesis well-adapted to the exigences of practical life, and at the same time of a high moral value." (*Souvenir de guerre,* I, 570.)

In this remarkable confession, a firm conviction is expressed in respect of the possibility and the significance of an ethical decision; furthermore, the belief that it is possible to harmonize the individual and collective goals. The result of these two fundamental views is Critical Optimism in the field of ethics. The view that it is possible to bring into a mutual harmony the goals of the individual with those of mankind is tantamount to the placing of confidence in the world, since these goals could also be viewed as tragically opposed, and not subject to such a harmonization. In the history of our world there would be ample reason for such a pessimistic outlook. That Beneš believes in the harmony or at least in the possibility of achieving such a harmony, constitutes the nucleus of his optimism. However, that harmony is no given fact; it does not arise by itself, but it requires an adequate conduct on the part of man; it requires moral action. The different goals that could be striven for must be kept asunder with a view to achieving or promoting harmony. They must be kept asunder by criticism on the basis of sound knowledge, on the basis of an adequate decision and of an adequate action. Thus Critical Optimism in the field of ethics becomes Ethical Activism.

Beneš stresses indefatigably the significance of human action; this is, indeed, a characteristic of Critical Optimism that does not naïvely believe that everything will come right by itself, but assigns to human action the role of an essential factor. In fact, it is on the action of man that all improvement in human life depends, on his character and on his work.

In his book on Democracy, Beneš particularly stresses that the struggle of man for a higher degree of freedom and personality does not proceed along a straight line and by way of

quiet evolution; it is in fact a wavelike up and down (page 148).

Beneš goes on to say that it is a cruel fact that mankind must pay a heavy price for their development. "Possibly there are some who will regard this conception of Philosophy to be far too pessimistic. Unfortunately, this is a fact established by History, a fact originating from the dispositions of the human spirit, from the psychology and from the laws of the human society. Besides, this is no pessimistic outlook at all. Neither do I accept absolute pessimism, nor absolute optimism as the characteristics of human society" (page 149).

What lies between absolute and realistic optimism (above we spoke in a strict formulation of Naïve and Critical Optimism), lies in the action of man, in the work, in the struggle for a better future. Beneš does not believe in the possibility of a mechanically-necessary development in the direction of the Good, nor does he believe in such a development in the sense of Dialectical Materialism (almost diametrically opposed to what we termed at the beginning of our essay as Dialectical Optimism). Beneš sees the only source of progress in the active assistance extended by the goodwill of man burdened with all risks conditioned by human nature.

From this point, a straight line leads to *Individualism*. What matters most, as far as the ethical field of Critical Optimism is concerned, is the ethical, responsible action of man. But who is exclusively able to act morally and responsibly? The individual. Not a mass or group as such. With a view to being able to perform a moral act, it is necessary to reach a decision and choose among possible doubts. In order to be able to decide upon a choice, one must be conscious of the possibilities given. The premise is then a uniform consciousness. A uniform consciousness, however, exists in an individual, but not in a mass or group of individuals. The consciousness of either a mass of individuals or of a group can be spoken of,

if at all, in a very inexact sense. Certainly there exists an exchange of influence between the individuals of a mass, and a more or less far reaching accordance, as a result of reason or effect, of single consciousnesses, but there exists in a mass of people no consciousness comparable with individual consciousnesses. *This is why the individual is the sole source of ethical acts.* The individual does not represent the goal or the only motive of a moral decision; such a view would be wrong individualism. It is the source of the moral acts, just as the 'ego' is the point of origin of all acts forthcoming from the consciousness. As Beneš believes in the moral decision, as he sees in it the primary condition for the progress of mankind, he can be described as an Ethical Individualist. His outlook is based on the conception of the sacredness of man as an ethical individual.

Beneš says in his book, *War and Culture,* 1922:

"A cultured man is only he who has reached a certain moral level, from the height of which he is able to respect human life, and every single individual, and to regard human individuality as sacred and intangible. . . ."

So highly appreciated by Beneš is the part played by the individual in human history that he rejects a materialist conception of History. In his view, the course of History depends on the collaboration of Providence with the action of the human individual.

Beneš's creed with regard to History is in complete harmony with that view. Let us quote that creed in full (from *The World War and Our Revolution,* page 528):

"I do not teach any kind of a blind social fatalism of unchained social forces. I have always rejected the Marxist theory of Historical Materialism. I believe in a certain logic in the course of History, the line of which is drawn by the human will, sentiment and endeavour. This is why I ascribe to the leading individuals the high rank of a guiding factor by which the course of social development is greatly influenced.

But as soon as the social forces reach a certain degree of intensity, the personal will is no more able to master them. At the most, a prominent leading individual is then able to take the lead of the unavoidable development, and soften the force of an explosion. It is in the individual action and in the free influence of individuals and masses of individuals that logic manifests itself in History, the logic that so often takes the shape of historical justice and retaliation.

" In that free influence, the unalterable moral and social law finds its expression that takes terrible or even brutal vengeance for any political guilt and crime. The stronger the shock caused by such a guilt, the more severe the retaliation. This induces me to stress as strongly as possible, beside the so-called fatalism in History, the great role of human action, of human work, of human endeavours, and of the determination of the individual to fight for social and political progress. In my view, each of us in his own sphere and to the extent of his own capacity, can take an active part in the imposing drama of mankind and be a partner in the great work of Providence." In his recent writings, Beneš dwells at length on the contrast between individualism and collectivism, a contrast of particular interest in view of the growing importance of the relations between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Though, in the economic field too, Beneš believes in the fruitfulness of a collaboration between the two countries, he retains to the full his individualist point of view :

" From the metaphysical and moral angle, I do not doubt that the struggle between Individualism and Collectivism can find no other solution, but by way of a clear admission that the individual is the primary factor. The human individual, both metaphysically and morally, is the most valuable factor influencing the social development. This is why I am an individualist " (page 116).

These words are clear enough and worthy of a man to whom politics, not based on philosophical foundations, are but a frivolous matter.

This is then the face of Beneš's individualism, and this is its part in History. From it the remaining primary philosophical elements of his politics can logically be deducted: humanitarianism; democracy; his conception of nationalism; his attitude towards the war; his attitude towards Anti-Semitism.

The moral decision of the human individual constitutes the source of all ethics and culture. But of a moral decision one can only speak, if it is adopted in conditions in which a free decision and assumption of responsibility is possible. This can only be the case if a decision is not adopted under compulsion, pressure of violence or threat. Humanitarianism or practically conceived humanitarian democracy is the political view according to which it is a primary condition of all cultural development that an individual is enabled to adopt his decision or to make his choice without external compulsion. From that principle of humanitarian democracy results the formal democracy with all its principles applied in practice: the decision by majority vote; the protection of minorities; the fundamental civic rights; parliamentarianism, etc.

All these political views are entirely consistent with the outlook termed by us as Critical Optimism. It is individualism that binds all of them together, the optimistic belief in the possibility of the adoption of moral decisions by the individual. Consistent with one another, as all these views theoretically are, they are also closely related to Dr. Beneš's philosophy in the political field.

Democracy is the primary political view of Dr. Beneš, the statesman and President. To his conception of Democracy, he gave ample expression in his writings. The book, *Democracy—To-day and To-morrow* adduces all of the philosophical and political enunciations made by Beneš during the last few years.

To him, as he himself says, " Modern Democracy becomes an entirely philosophical outlook on life, a philosophical and social system, a conception pervading in all directions the

lives of all those who profess the new creed of Democratic Religion."

"The list of leading spirits in the field of that philosophy includes a number of brilliant names of modern philosophers, historians and politicians: Locke, Montesquieu Rousseau and Voltaire; Kant, Lessing, Herder; theorists of the American Constitution; men who, in 1848, carried on the great tradition of the French Revolution; and many leading modern Socialists. All these men are a very heterogeneous set of thinkers, but out of their theories the general doctrine of the philosophical foundation of Modern Democracy has arisen. The nature of Democracy can be outlined as follows: "Against the medieval principle of different social castes and classes, the principle of the Equality of Man has been proclaimed for the entire human species. Due to Hume, Lessing and Herder who assigned a high ethical significance to the conception of humanity, that conception becomes deeper, more rooted and more real. Mankind—they say—is beside the idea of God, the highest value that the world possesses or can possess at all. Mankind is the goal of all social activities, the goal towards which everything is moving, and which reflects all that is happening. The goal of any true political endeavour must be to help mankind in organizing their lives so as to make them human, honest and worthy physically and spiritually, as well as in the economic, social and cultural field. Every single individual should be regarded as representative of mankind and humanity. This is why, for the sake of establishing a proper conception of mankind, we must add to the idea of equality—that of fraternity, both being the great ideals of the French Revolution. The conception of Fraternity stresses the sentimental, ethical element by expressing the idea of charity. These two conceptions combined constitute the theoretical significance of Humanitarianism. Only in such a conception, the true contents of the philosophical elements underlying the democratic outlook, reach their full expression. All further

elements by which the range of the conception of Democracy has been widened, are but deducted from these philosophical premises. First of all, the conception of freedom: Freedom is one of the highest moral and material goods a human being can acquire in the society. The conception of freedom logically originates from that of equality, since the latter presupposes equal duties and equal rights for all. Freedom is such a right. Thus the conception of equality includes the right to an equal degree of freedom. Democracy therefore strives to equalize the measure of freedom for all. The degree of freedom is only limited by the equal degree of freedom and of other rights due to every single citizen. Logically from this theoretical-philosophical premise, evolve all institutions known in a democratic society; in the society, life is only then possible and tolerable if the freedom of every single individual is respected. This respect must be established by way of decrees, regulations and laws; and then maintained and preserved." *(Difficulties of Democracy,* 1924.*)*

"Thus conceived"—Beneš carries on—"Democracy, as it follows clearly from all philosophical principles underlying it, depends in the political field on two extremely important factors, the absence of which is unthinkable: on a democratic conception of labour and on science. Democracy means in the first rate: Work, a good deal of work, of constant, indefatigable hard work." Here, too, in that particular stress laid on work, Critical Optimism becomes again distinctly discernible. Naïve, democratic optimism is not enough; it does not come into being by itself. What matters is: discerning judgment, individual influence, work, indefatigable work. Only in such a way, development is possible. Beneš therefore exacts from the politician: *work* first and foremost. What is the difference between the democratic and the aristocratic statesman? "The latter only wants to rule, the other is intent on work." *(Democracy—To-day and To-morrow,* page 208.*)*

As President of the Republic, Dr. Beneš established almost

a Gospel of work, based on the following principles:

"Everybody must be intent on doing his job properly. In an era of Science and the Machine, only a fully qualified worker can be successful."

And in respect of intellectual workers:

"Specialization in one of the disciplines of one's profession, as protection against perfunctoriness."

"The key to happiness in life will be found if, on the basis of these principles, work becomes creation and a source of joy."

"Every worker must preserve a sense of responsibility when doing his work. Let every single worker accept that responsibility, openly, straightforwardly, uprightly, honestly."

The foremost principle is "that every individual should be intent on performing his work properly. The Middle Ages, the era of patriarchalism, of the system of privileged classes, of the romantic nineteenth century, when people used to view life as a somewhat fantastical matter, and to look at it as Bohemians and hazarders, irrevocably belongs to the past. . . ." Life is unimaginable without work that must be done exactly, faultlessly, and as rationally as possible." *(Conditions of a Successful Life,* 1930.)

The second fundamental element of Democracy is science; linked with it are school education and instruction. Beneš says:

"The fact that Democracy presupposes the consent of or the consultation with all citizens in respect of every political decision, establishes the necessity of criticism and discussion, that is to say, a full range of arguments, facts, motivations and evidence. Arguments, facts and evidence, however, is supplied by science. A most extensive development of science and public instruction thus prove to constitute a necessary supplementation of Democracy.

Certainly, the Critical Optimist does not view Democracy, too, as a settled static possession. Beneš often stresses in his

book, and no one knows better than he does, to what high extent Democracy depends on the men who put it into effect, and how it must be defended and reshaped again and again, as all that is of real value in this world. "Democratic Freedom," Beneš says, "is a good that is always in danger, and that must be cultivated, protected and constantly perfected. While preserving its fundamental principles, we must reshape it again and again, and daily and hourly educate the people to Democracy, by convincing them of its high ethical and pedagogical value." This means, therefore: Democracy must be constantly reshaped in the light of experience had with democratic institutions. And no one has in fact had so much of experience with a young democratic state as Beneš himself, with that democratic state which he had himself helped to create, and each of whose difficulties and crises in the course of its history he had helped to solve in his capacity as a leading statesman, and the collapse of which under the blow of the brutal neighbour was almost identical with his own resignation.

This is why it is most instructive to hear what Beneš has learned from his experience, and what are the new forms which he suggests for the future Czechoslovak Democracy.

Beneš thinks above all of a reduction of the number and of the power of the parties. He considers that this can be achieved by a reduction of the right to establish new parties. The foundation of a new party should, under a constitutional provision, be made to depend on the approval of the Parliament or of another very authoritative institution. Furthermore, a simple general fundamental principle should be found, by which all party programmes could be differentiated. The adoption of the old principle of political polarity of Progress and Conservatism could promote that task. These two trends should be joined by a third, representing the centre. More than these three parties are not necessary. Within such a system of differentiation, all further divergencies in politics

and outlooks on life, and all differences of religious, social or economic nature, can find their respective places.

There is no doubt that in this point Beneš is inspired by the system of British Democracy which has so magnificently stood its test during the present war.

Another reform planned by Beneš is widely felt as a necessity: the establishment of an "Economic Democracy." "The Political Democracy," Beneš says, "must become after the present war a Social and Economic Democracy." The influence of the Soviet Union, and first and foremost, the development of the war industry which in many countries has practically led to a State Socialism, point in that direction. Nevertheless, one must admit that Beneš is right when he says that he has no illusions, well knowing that this will be the most difficult of all post-war problems. It is quite obvious that it will be even harder than the thorny political issues that will have to be solved.

A particularly important problem for post-war Czechoslovakia will be that of the national minorities. In his book, Beneš supports the idea of a reduction of the rights of the minorities as such. Every single member of a national minority will enjoy unrestricted human freedom. But it must not be again made possible that, within the boundaries of a state, minorities should become almost internationally recognized legal bodies. Such a state of affairs would carry with it germs of separatism and of disintegration of the State." Beneš does not say to what extent these human rights will include the right of members of a national minority to cultural activities in their own national language. This will be another problem for Democracy to solve.

In the centre of Beneš's humanitarian conception not only the individual, but also *the Nation* finds its place. Just because the two outlooks in respect of both the individual and the nation, have their origin in Beneš's humanitarianism, they are

entirely compatible; more than that, they supplement each other. The same is, of course, the relation between Nation and Mankind; the Nation is conceived as a *way* to Mankind.

Beneš is a nationalist, since to him culture rightly means national culture. Within a nation, the individuals are bearers of the moral culture, while the national culture itself is the legitimate bearer of the great culture of humanity.

"National culture covering the political, economic, social, artistic, moral and intellectual fields had only then high lasting value, if it was in accordance with Humanity, and the ideals of Mankind. This is why all national cultures must strive for harmony with the ideals of Mankind. . . . Patriotism I would define as *love* of the culture of one's own people and *reverence* towards the cultures of other nations. There exist no general human cultures, *but only national ones.*" *(The World War and Our Revolution.)*

"A genuine patriot is he who understands that the Nation and national culture are and should be expressions of Humanity. A beautiful, august and perfect humanity can only manifest itself in achievements of national culture, while where individuals are concerned, it manifests itself in an attitude of love and reverence towards such achievements. This is why they are compatible with each other; the national feeling and the individual consciousness of humanity are supplementary to one another." *(World War.)*

And he says of himself:

"I have carried out my national and human duty during the struggle for national independence, not because I regarded the Nation, the collective as the *all-important self-sufficient factor and as a goal in itself;* I carried out my duty because I regarded it as an imperative necessity that every individual, just as every 'collective individual,' that is to say every Nation, should live in freedom and independence and *develop* its national culture.

"To him who believes in humanitarian ideals, every

action and every emotional factor serves Mankind and the Nation, and promotes *at the same time* the development of the individual. For that kind of work and for that service, no particular appreciation and no reward can be either expected or demanded; it is in itself a goal, and accords the individual greatest inner satisfaction. That kind of work is usually done with religious devotion and is—sacred!"

In his contemplations on Nationalism, Beneš launches a sharp attack against Aristocratic Nationalism, that is to say, against the view that there are peoples which are of a *far higher value* than other nations, and that they have a greater right to live than other nations, hence deriving the right to oppress or annihilate them. Really, there is no need to stress to what extent that problem, which was always regarded by Beneš to be of utmost importance, influenced the course of events during the last few years. It is the problem of the *small nations,* including the Czech people. Beneš, therefore, dwells on that question at length, viewing it from the philosophical angle.

He declares that national cultures *are not comparable* with each other in respect of their value. Each of them has *its own irreplaceable value.* There exists no criterion for any quantitative comparison. In his book *(War and Culture),* Beneš writes:

"The manifestations of the spiritual culture are the most perfect manifestations of human nature. Is it possible altogether to measure materialistically, by means of figures, what has its source in the deepest essence of human existence and what is a solitary manifestation of the creative force of a nation, or in other words, what is the most genuine manifestation of human nature? Can it be judged in such a way altogether?

"Spiritual culture is something solitary and unrepeatable, something extremely individual and characteristical. Where do we then possess any criteria which would enable us to judge these manifestations?

"*We possess no such criteria, and therefore there are no higher cultures either!* All of them are of equal value, but at the same time they are different from each other. The former view is that of Aristocratic Nationalism which gives a right to one national culture to *destroy* another or at least to prevent its free development. Aristocratic Nationalism has no esteem for any national individuality, and no respect for any national culture.

"A genuine Philosophy of History, however, must see in any manifestation of the human individuality, in any manifestation of humanity, part of what has been given to man for his terrestrial life by the Cosmic order; or shall we call it Providence? Properly conceived individualism that sees in every human individuality the highest value that we have ever possessed or known, applies Philosophy of History to the lives of *national individualities.* The individualist desires to preserve the rights of his own individuality, conceding at the same time to national collectives the right to autonomous, national lives of their own. Any manifestation of national life enriches the tremendous abundance of life generally that can be viewed, in all human individuals as well as in all collective national individualities, as the manifestation of the same great, unknown Absolute towards which are making their way all human individuals, all collective national individualities, and the entire Mankind altogether. It is *sinful* and *unworthy* to disturb the manifestations of the lives of national individualities, just as the lives of human individuals are sacred. Hampering the development of national cultures, attempting to annihilate them and bar them from life—is the greatest sin against Mankind ever known by human society.

" This is what our Philosophy of History should be! "

I have quoted in full that important passage, since it seems to me that it represents the very essence of Beneš's Philosophy of History, that is the ethical source of his political work. What he tells us above shows again to what extent his views

originate from his individualism, and to what extent the latter emanates from his ethical conviction.

In accordance with that philosophy is the judgment he passes against national Chauvinism—the Hyper-Nationalism, as he says—as well as against Totalitarianism. He is always intent on promoting an equilibrium between human individuals, nations, that is to say, collective national individualities, and the whole of mankind. Passionately he rejects expansive nationalism which "gives rise to situations characterized by a constant danger of wars and catastrophes, and in which the conceptions of State and Nation become an idol to which all must be sacrificed, that is of value in the individual life and in the world altogether. That type of nationalism sets up the worship of State and Nation, but turns the Freedom of Man into slavery." (Address to the Germans, 1935.)

That every nation has a right to develop its national culture and a claim to the degree of independence needed for that purpose, is perfectly clear to the founder of the Czechoslovak State and defender of Humanitarian Nationalism. Dr. Beneš strongly repudiates blind Chauvinism. "Nationalism in the sense of loyalty to and love of one's people and of proud adherence to one's own culture, is undoubtedly a highly appreciable ideal, deeply rooted and elementary. But if Nationalism is not to become a relapse into the era of bestiality and barbarism, it must take a determined stand against demagogy and, above all, against brutal Anti-Semitism. A nation which does not allow Totalitarian Chauvinism and barbarous racialism to sink roots in its mind, proves by this fact alone its high cultural and ethical level. It can be stated with joy that the Czech nation, in its overwhelming majority, both before and after Munich, has not succumbed to such a danger." *(Democracy,* page 69.)

Thus it is evident that Beneš is strongly opposed to *the principle of power and violence.*

He is definitely opposed to the view that the mission of a

nation is limited to its *struggle for existence and national life.* No—according to Beneš—it extends to ethical, religious and ideal creative contents as well. *(The World War and Our Revolution.)*

He says:

"I do not, and I cannot, believe in a *Philosophy of Power.*" Saying so he declares himself against Nietzsche's German philosophy and that of his successors, which has in our days become a reality, certainly more ghastly and terrible than Beneš could have imagined when he wrote: "It is a barbarous, inhuman, absurd philosophy. It is just as absurd and perfunctory, as any philosophy would be which would refuse to admit that there exists the application of violence in international life, and that it is necessary that the nations are prepared to ward it off. It is a great difference, whether a nation is out for power with a view to establishing a rule of justice, or whether its tendency is to attain power as a means of exerting violence. The argument that any statesman, even that who professes the principle of power, is entitled to rely on his own law and on his own justice, is entirely devoid of foundation. I object to that sort of philosophical, political and moral Relativism and Macchiavellism.

"That the nations should necessarily be fighting against one another simply following the principle of strength and power, cannot represent the historical mission of any nation. . . . I do not believe in such a philosophy, and I shall always be opposed to it."

This is what Beneš wrote long before the Second World War. After what has been experienced by him, by Czechoslovakia and by the entire world, as a result of Power Politics, Beneš sticks to-day more firmly than ever to this view. The difference between an Authoritative-Totalitarian system and Democracy constitutes, according to Beneš, the philosophical contrast between Materialism and Spiritualism.

"In this struggle," Beneš says *(Democracy—To-day and*

To-morrow, page 115), "every single, thinking human individual must be courageous enough to reach a decision. Every single individual must decide whether he wants to become part of a mass ruled by power, or whether he wants to live a life pervaded by spirit and justice. Fascism and National Socialism embody the principle of brutal force. Against that principle, Democracy declares itself in support of the moral and spiritual factors. There can be no peace between these two outlooks, neither in theory nor in practice."

The difference between national socialist and democratic politics is viewed by Beneš, the philosopher and statesman, as one of a deeply philosophical nature. He sums it up as follows:

"(1) While Democracy is an expression of philosophical universalism, humanitarianism and equalitarianism, in accordance with rationalism and the philosophy of general human rights. National Socialism takes its stand against Humanitarianism, Universalism and Equalitarianism; it represents an extremist nationalist exclusivism and violent nationalist egocentrism, in opposition to the ideals of mankind; it is violent racial aristocratism in opposition to the principle of the equality of the nations; it is primitive voluntarism, intuitionism and instinctivism, in opposition to the mature rationalism and intellectualism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

"(2) The Racial Theory is perfunctory, uncultured, aristocratic like all other foundations on which National Socialism has been built up.

"(3) The idea of 'Volkstum' and 'national collective' leads to State-Totalitarianism, to the oppression of the freedom of the individual, in short, to the oppression of all that is characteristic for modern Democracy.

"(4) Under the totalitarianism regime, the conception of Law is extremely subjective, utilitarian, violent, egocentric and anarchist from the international point of view. It expresses the conviction that Might is Right." (*Democracy—To-day and To-morrow*, page 142.)

If we proceed to sum up once again, from a general point of view, Dr. Beneš's philosophical and political outlook, we can term it as '*midway philosophy.*' Beneš knows that Truth and the Right Path cannot be found on the poles, but in midway. The same principle he follows when examining the great contrasts between philosophical thought and political life. He always strives to find a fruitful balance between the great contrasts of individual and community; nation and mankind; realism and idealism; freedom and authority; militarism and pacifism.

In another place we tried to show* that the conception of a midway attitude cannot be clearly defined; there are in fact a great many of 'midways' entirely different from each other, both as regards their nature and their value. There exists a bad midway, and one which could be termed as rotten (that of a 'subtractive compromise,' for instance) or the hysterical midway, and there are others which could be regarded as the true ways of progress: the synthetical and the creative midways.

Now what is that midway attitude to which Beneš refers? The reply to this question is clear enough: he constantly strives for the synthetical midway and is aware of the contrasts dividing mankind in respect of their goals and ideals. He is aware of the abyss stretching between the poles of these contrasts. Nevertheless, *he is convinced that there exists some kind of higher harmony by which all these contrasts could be overcome, and that such harmony could be achieved by an appropriate ethical effort and by honest work.*

To him synthesis, balance, harmony are both goal and method.

Speaking of the Czech people he says:

"Due to our geographical situation alone, we cannot but strive for a cultural synthesis.

"Striving for such a synthesis is in my view tantamount to

* *Venture of the Midway*, by Felix Weltsch.

striving *for a well-balanced human spirit* in which there would be no sentimentality and no stumbling from one extreme to another, no mere insensibility and no mere reason, but harmony uniting reason and sentiment and all spiritual factors active in a man who avoids extremes, being intent on balancing his life and applying harmony in his vocational work and in his daily life generally."

His philosophy, too, Beneš has thus built up on a synthesis. It is as he says himself—a synthesis in which echoes of doctrines of Descartes, Kant, Locke, Hume, but also of Bergson and Masaryk merge into a characteristic fruitful unity. Dwelling on the need for synthesis and harmony in social life, Beneš extends his contemplations to the human spirit, and pleads for " une alliance de l'intelligence avec une dose necessaire d'intuition, une alliance, dans laquelle l'intelligence conservait la premiere place. . . ." Ultimately he seeks " une synthese du coeur et de la raison." *(Souvenir,* I, pp. 14–15.)

The conception that it is possible to attain a synthesis and find harmony in the external world, brings us back to the point from which we started: Critical Optimism. Dr. Edward Beneš writes in his *Difficulties of Democracy:* " Democracy has the tendency to expansion and depth. The reason lies in the human spirit itself. It results from meditation, criticism, discussion and ideal dispute that the human spirit knows no barriers." As this is the case, we may be allowed in the following to dwell critically on Critical Optimism.

Properly speaking the criterion for the criticism of a certain critical philosophical point of view can be found in the quotation just adduced. The human spirit must know no barriers. Criticism must not serve for the erection of barriers, but be a method of infinite mental expansion. In other words, the critical outlook on life, as well as critical optimism must not become static and lose the tendency to evolution. The Critical

Optimist may not anticipate the possibility of a synthesis where tragic chasms yawn; he may not believe in adjustment where unbridgeable contrasts exist. The conception of 'Providence' with an Almighty and All-merciful Being in its centre, imposes on the human mind problems which, in the face of the evil in the world, cannot be solved by ways of rational synthesis. Also Critical Realism cannot solve either the problems of the Theory of Knowledge or the question for the criterion of the absolute value, that is to say, the fundamental theoretical problem of Ethics. The critical examination of the last problems prevents the Critical Optimist, in so far as his criticism is inexorable and does not let itself be carried away by any illusions, from ridding himself from all doubts in the domain of Metaphysics, of the Theory of Knowledge or of Ethics. The way leading to perfection has no terminus. Acquisition of Knowledge and valuation thus becomes a process which does not stop anywhere. The creative by-effects of that endless process become another source of optimism—which is, however, entirely different from Critical Optimism. It is a dialectical optimism on which I could not dwell at length without leaving the frame of this essay.

Anyway, Critical Optimism proves not to be a final theoretical outlook. There is no way to overcome the contradictions arising from all human attempts, finally to grasp the Ideal, the Truth, the Good and God. The Dialectic to which courageous indefatigable criticism must lead, unless after letting itself be calmed by Illusion it reaches the point of a spiritual 'short circuit,' urges the Critical Optimist on and drives him out of the scope of Critical Optimism, as a theoretical outlook.

The Critical Outlook, therefore, must not become a philosophy serving to allay all doubts; it must not stop anywhere; it must be intent on Progress. Theoretically, this way leads to the dialectical outlook, to Dialectical Optimism by which Critical Optimism is viewed as part of the Dialectic leading to Dialectical Optimism.

The Philosopher, Edward Beneš, too, does not stop. He sees no way to allay all his doubts. Though he does not make a final step to the dialectical outlook, he makes another step that is decisive; he proceeds to action. The philosopher becomes a statesman. From this point of view, it is far more understandable that statesmanship—as Beneš views it—is philosophy and that to him philosophy becomes statesmanship.

Again and again criticism leads Beneš to action. His criticism is never static but moves on along the path of progress. In theory, any criticism unless it seeks final mitigation of doubts, unless it stops, must become dialectic, both in principle and theory. But there is also another way of moving onwards: the step from Theory to Practice.

That trend to practical action has always been a characteristic feature of Beneš's philosophy. On every step we can see that Beneš's conception of criticism leads to action and work. *Noetic* becomes above all *active work*. The motto, "Truth will triumph," means "that it is incumbent on all of us to work for Truth, assist Truth, and indefatigably fight for Truth."

Noetic itself—as Beneš understands it—becomes politics. Work in his view is what matters most in a democracy.

It results from Beneš's Critical Optimism that he is not only a philosophically trained statesman who directs the politics on a philosophical line, but a philosopher proper who is statesman, out of his own philosophy, on the basis of his own philosophical outlook.

Thus the circle of our thoughts on Beneš closes by showing us how the ring of Beneš's thoughts opens up and leads the philosopher to actual politics—to action! To expound all that, I have written my present essay without attempting to give a full idea of Beneš's philosophical and critical thought, or trying to place before the readers a full appreciation of Beneš's achievements as a statesman. I was first of all intent on unveiling the nucleus of Beneš's great personality, and on showing how, out of that 'primary phenomenon' as we called it,

his exceptional individuality and his life work have developed in an original and yet logical way.

In Edward Beneš we can see not only a statesman and head of state who happened to be a philosopher, but a philosopher who became a statesman, in logical evolution of his philosophical thought, of that particular type of Critical Optimism, the theory of which he created, and which led him again and again to indefatigable work and to creative action.

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Czechoslovakia and Europe. The Foreign Policy of Dr. Beneš

MASARYK said: "Without Beneš there would have been no Czechoslovakia." One can reverse the saying: "Without Czechoslovakia there would have been no Beneš." The man made the country, and the country made the man, the history of the one entwined with the life of the other. History records no other example of such a complete identification. Metternich directed the foreign policy of the Austrian Empire for thirty-nine years and claimed to express Austria in his 'system.' But Metternich always knew that his system would not endure and, indeed, saw it crumble eleven years before his death. Talleyrand spanned the twenty-five years of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars; he took part in the first decisive actions of the States General and presided over the Restoration after the fall of Napoleon, so that nineteenth century France might be called the Talleyrand 'system.' But in the interval Talleyrand had known periods of exile, obscurity and retirement; he sometimes influenced his epoch, but never guided it. Dr. Beneš, however, has been the embodiment of Czechoslovakia in Europe from the moment of his arrival in Paris in 1916 to the present eve of his triumphant return to Prague. He has represented his country at one great Peace Conference after a world war; and at the next peace conference he will be the sole survivor of the last. There is a Beneš 'system'; and unlike the system of Metternich the future of his system is even brighter and more promising than its past.

The European order which Dr. Beneš expresses can be de-

fined in simple terms: it is the attempt to give Europe security and peace through the co-operation of independent national states instead of by means of the domination of a dynasty or of a single 'master' Power. It is the system of democracy in international affairs, the necessary parallel to the rise of democracy within the separate European communities.

It seeks to plan from below, by consent, where every previous scheme for Europe has planned from above, by authority. Oliver Cromwell said of his dictatorship: "What's for their good, not what they want—that is the question." This is the guiding principle of all planners and Utopians, of all those who try to force men into their preconceived pattern. Utopianism reached its highest form in the Nazi 'New Order,' the greatest achievement of the ruthless intellect ever known in the political world. The 'New Order' has shown, once and for all, that unrestrained rationalism in politics can be accomplished only by violence and that Utopians are the worst of terrorists. The system of Dr. Beneš was slower and, at its first test, less effective; yet it is the Beneš system, not the 'New Order,' which seems destined to survive.

A system of politics, whether national or international, leaves the realm of Utopia only if it corresponds to the needs and outlook of living social forces. Every form of government must rest on a governing class, an oligarchy, whether economic or intellectual, which identifies itself with the system and carries its burdens. Hence the turmoil of our epoch. We are living in an age when the old foundations of authority, and therewith the old forms of government, have become inadequate; and the new oligarchies have not established their position. For many centuries the responsibilities of government rested, in every state, on the landowners—the hereditary nobility—and on their supreme incorporation, the great territorial dynasties. The dynasties owned the states, as the lords owned the land; between them, sometimes co-operating, sometimes quarrelling, they ruled over and exploited their

subjects, serfs, 'souls.' This system perished in France with the great revolution. Ownership—sovereignty—passed from the Kings to the People; and the new system found in the French middle classes an oligarchy to operate it. In England the old order was so modified by peaceful means as almost to lose its old qualities; and there grew up an oligarchy of compromise, which combined the traditional ruling class with new elements—with the industrial middle classes and, later, even the Trade Union leaders.

East of the Rhine the great dynasties all survived into the twentieth century; and in 1914 all this vast territory was still shared, directly or indirectly, between the Habsburgs, the Hohenzollerns, the Romanovs and the Ottomans. But the economic foundations of this dynastic word had long been crumbling; the ownership of 'souls' was no longer the key to political power. Industrialism did not halt at the Rhine, and every factory, every expanding town, brought nearer the collapse of the old order; even the great estates, so far as they still counted, were being run on commercial lines in the spirit of the Revolution. The peasant touches his cap to the squire and thinks of the Emperor as a greater squire, infinitely remote; he is 'owned' and expects to be owned. The factory owner touches his hat to no one; and the factory worker, though he may touch his hat to his employer, is not owned by him and, in fact, organizes Trade Unions to curb his power. Factories are the death of dynasties. The urban masses cannot be held together by a simple territorial conception; they demand an idea, and that idea can only be the national community. Moreover, these subversive ideas cannot be confined to the towns: the peasant, too, ceases to recognize the authority of his lord and will acknowledge no owner of the land but himself. Respect vanishes; and a new world has to be created in which there is no place for tradition.

Even before 1914 the old order was in dissolution. All the great dynasties, to keep themselves alive, had had to compro-

mise with the modern world and to stimulate a national sentiment foreign to their tradition. The Hohenzollerns, rulers of a land where more than half the population was divorced from the soil, had become the exponents of Pan-Germanism, although Pan-Germanism was in origin and in essence an anti-dynastic force. This most selfish and calculating of dynasties subordinated its policy to the expansionist aims of the great German industrialists; and its dynastic ambitions were no more than a gloss on the march of German power. The Habsburgs identified their rule with the national monopoly of the Magyars and, to a lesser extent, with the privileges of the Germans. Even the Ottoman Sultans accepted a nationalistic disguise from the 'Young Turks.' Strangest case of all was that of the Romanov Tsars: consciously they presented themselves as Great Russian patriots, unconsciously and incompetently they expressed the unity of Eastern Slav civilization.

None of these dynasties survived the Four Years' War, the war of Four Successions. At Paris the victorious allies seemed to have the world at their feet. But to settle four problems simultaneously is to invite failure in all four; and so it was after 1919. The Ottoman succession was indeed settled, not by the allies, but by the rise of Turkish nationalism. The Habsburg succession was settled not by the allies, but by the peoples of the Habsburg empire. The Hohenzollern succession was not settled by the allies, and the people of Germany were incompetent to solve it; it was left as the great unanswered question of the future. As for the Romanov succession, the allies made here the greatest blunders of all: they nibbled at the edges of the Russian empire as though it had ceased to exist and then shrank back from determining the fate of Russia without admitting (what was in fact the case) that the peoples of Russia had settled its fate for themselves. To allow German power to survive and to fail to recognize that Russian power had survived—these were the twin errors of Paris in 1919; and they doomed the Versailles system to destruction.

The Habsburg empire did not fall by accident; nor could it have been saved by devices of skilful diplomacy. Its mainspring was broken. Industrialism and its concomitant, universal education, made a dynastic empire impossible; and there was no single nationality who could take over the Habsburg empire, as the Germans took over the Empire of the Hohenzollerns. The collapse of the Habsburg empire was not only complete, but final; and it is a grotesque misunderstanding to ascribe the later troubles of Europe to the failure of the Habsburg succession, when in fact the Habsburg settlement would have been permanent and stable had it not been for the breakdown of the Versailles settlement of Germany. To attribute the fall and dismemberment of the national states in central and south-eastern Europe to their own defects is comparable to condemning Sir Christopher Wren as an architect because of the collapse of the City churches in the blitz of 1940–41. In their system of security and in their ensuring the permanence of the Paris settlement in the Danube valley the 'succession states' set an example which the great powers would have done well to follow in their treatment of Germany.

The centre of the post-Habsburg order was inevitably Czechoslovakia. Of all the succession states it alone possessed a fully developed oligarchy which could take over the responsibilities of government. Bohemia was an industrial country and an educated country, the two essential prerequisites for a constructive national sentiment. Moreover, by good chance, the native territorial aristocracy of Bohemia had perished in the struggles of the seventeenth century; and the territorial aristocracy of the Slovak lands was Magyar. Therefore the Czechoslovak people could develop a national consciousness free from the distortions and contradictions of aristocratic tradition. The Czechoslovak idea could not be other than democratic; it had no sense unless it rested on the Czechoslovak people. Thus the foreign policy of Dr. Beneš had the foresight and system of an established order without the con-

servatism and rigidity which seeks to preserve decaying social conditions. Roumania and Yugoslavia, the other succession states, were also the expression of awakening peasant nationalism; but both lacked the advanced industrialism and the advanced educational system of the Czechs, and, as a result, the governing oligarchy—in Yugoslavia the Serb army officers, in Roumania the professional politicians of Bucharest—was narrow and unimaginative. Both were politically immature; yet they accepted the constructive ideas and far-sighted lead of Dr. Beneš—striking proof of the effectiveness of leadership whenever it is offered.

Though the problems of the Habsburg succession cannot, in fact, be separated from the general European order, it is worth while isolating them as an academic exercise in order to appreciate the success of the Beneš system. The pattern was simple: first security, then—but only then—reconciliation. The most obvious menace to the new order in central Europe was a Habsburg restoration; and almost before the new states were established Dr. Beneš began the construction of the anti-Habsburg alliance, half contemptuously called the Little Entente, of which one can say that it would have been fortunate for the world if the Great Entente had displayed half the energy and achieved half the success of its little counterpart. But a Habsburg restoration, though an obvious, was not a real danger: the roots of Habsburg power had been torn up for ever. Real was the resentment of the classes and nations which had enjoyed a privileged position under the Habsburgs and whose privileges had been destroyed. There were two losers in the settlement of 1919: the Germans of Austria and the Magyar landed class of Hungary. Sentimentalists in England and France never wearied in their exhortations to the Little Entente that these two losers should be appeased. But the Little Entente, under the guidance of Dr. Beneš, did not follow this course. First security and then reconciliation remained their unshakable principle; to en-

courage those forces in Austria and Hungary which favoured co-operation in the Danube valley and to give relentless opposition to the forces which desired the restoration of privilege and national inequality, their method.

Austria was the easier problem. Here there had been a social revolution, though a revolution which stopped half way. The forces of clericalism and of finance which wished to see Vienna again dominating over central Europe were not, at first, strong enough to hold their own even within the Republic of Austria; working class power was great enough to make Austria for some time a peaceful and democratic state. Czechoslovakia threw all its weight on the side of the democratic elements in Austria; and indeed kept democratic Austria alive even when it could no longer survive by its own strength. In the end Czechoslovakia could not succeed against the weight of Italian intervention and the helpless indifference of the western powers; and in 1934 the Beneš system suffered a disastrous defeat in the overthrow of democratic Austria. Still, even then, clerical-fascist Austria—though no longer a positive asset—was too feeble to be a serious menace to the peace and order of central Europe; and there can be no doubt that, with the disappearance of the sham Italian power, a democratic Austria can again flourish under Czechoslovak patronage.

The real problem in central Europe was Hungary, irreconcilable and aristocratic. The failure of the Károlyi regime, which held out the promise of a democratic Hungary, was a disaster both for Hungary and for Europe; but in the circumstances of 1919 its fall was inevitable. Even its leader—the noblest figure in Hungarian history—was in 1919 not abreast of events and still believed that democratic changes in Hungary would preserve the traditional Hungarian frontiers. The great powers, indeed, in their fear of Bolshevism, committed every possible error; but they would never have accomplished their end had it not been for Károlyi's own

mistakes. When Károlyi fell there was no chance of Hungary becoming a peaceful and contented member of the Danube system. Horthy's reactionary government preserved the great estates and therefore condemned Hungary to be irreconcilable. The Hungarian masses were persuaded that their suffering and poverty were not due, as was in fact the case, to the maintenance of aristocratic rule, but to the injustices of the treaty of Trianon. Trianon was the alibi which enabled the Horthys and Bethlens to survive. Time and again Dr. Beneš called their bluff. In 1921, 1922 and 1926 he offered Hungary treaty revision; but revision on condition that Hungary would declare herself satisfied and would accept her modest place in a democratic central Europe. Always the Hungarian governing classes refused; for the sake of their privileges they dared not admit that the injustices of Trianon had ceased to exist. At a time when this same governing class is preparing a new democratic masquerade, it is worth while to insist: the failure to establish wider, deeper, political and economic co-operation in central Europe between the wars was the fault of the Hungarian governing class and of the Hungarian governing class alone. How could the narrow-minded aristocrats of 'thousand year old' Hungary ever co-operate with the peasant born leaders of new national states? They could not co-operate and they can never co-operate. So long as they preserve their economic and social position there can be no unity in the Danube valley; and they will be again, as they have been in the past and are now, the agents and principal promoters of German imperialism.

For, despite our academic exercise, the problems of the Habsburg succession cannot be separated from the menace of German power. The real claimant to the empire of the Habsburgs was not the Germans of Austria nor the Magyar landed class, but the great German Reich, which thus sought to make itself the heir of both Habsburg and Hohenzollern. In barring the way to a Pan-German order the Habsburg empire had

once performed a vital function; but it could only perform this function so long as political power rested with a privileged landed class. In the twentieth century the Habsburg empire became an agency for compelling Slav peoples to fight for the cause of German hegemony in Europe. Some other force had to take the place of the worm-eaten Habsburg monarchy, and this force could only be the confident and independent nationalism of the Czechoslovak people. Hence Dr. Beneš, the spokesman of the Czechoslovaks, could not confine himself to the Little Entente and to the defeat of Hungarian ambitions. He had to become a European statesman and to play his part in the general European order. Here, too, his policy remained the same: first security and then reconciliation; appeasement from strength, not from weakness.

The twenty years between 1919 and 1939 were full of plans for establishing security in Europe, and in every plan Czechoslovakia played her full part. Dr. Beneš can never at heart have believed in the grandiose plan of establishing, at one burst, a system of security which would lay down an all-embracing world order for all time. Still he, more than any other, worked to make the League of Nations real by reducing it to manageable proportions: by limiting its commitments he sought to make these commitments effective. He recognized from the first that the League of Nations was a fine sounding name for the Anglo-French alliance; the victorious Powers of 1919 were to be the guarantors of the European order which they had created. This is the key to the collapse of the Beneš system in 1938: it was deserted by its backers. It is more rewarding to explore the causes of this great mistake than to imagine that no mistake was made: this is the course taken by Dr. Beneš himself, which ensures that the new Beneš system will be more enduring than the old.

The victory of 1918 was due to the co-operation of four great powers—France, England, the United States and Russia (Italy, the ostensible fifth, was, in fact, not a great power at

all). Of these one, Russia, took no part in the Peace Conference, in part excluded by the capitalist prejudices of the allies, in part excluding herself through her own anti-capitalist prejudices. A second, the United States, took part in the Conference, but repudiated all responsibility for the outcome. A third, England, continued to give herself the airs of having a European policy, but in fact condemned herself to be ineffective. Thus the entire weight of maintaining the settlement of 1919 fell on France, the weakest and most exhausted of the victors. In the years immediately after 1919 the weakness of France was not apparent; in any case there was for the new states no alternative—they had to rely on France or no one at all. Hence the basis of Czechoslovak policy was the Czech-French alliance; an alliance which, at any rate, gave Europe a twenty years' respite. But it is not easy to see the weakness and defects of a great power upon whom you are completely dependent, particularly when that great power has a glorious past, and has, with whatever effort, emerged victorious in the greatest war in history. Dr. Beneš relied on France too completely and too long. But what man of education could altogether escape bewitchment by the French heritage? All Europe has been bemused by it since the fall of Napoleon, and not least the French themselves.

Still, though there was a profound mistake in Czechoslovak policy, it was a mistake of emphasis: at no time did Dr. Beneš cease to attempt to draw the other Great Powers back into the affairs of Europe. The United States can never play a primary role in European affairs: she can intervene in the third or fourth year of a European war, but she cannot prevent one. It is England and Russia who have to become the guarantors of the liberty of Europe. Dr. Beneš laboured to win over both, though—for inevitable historic reasons—he certainly expected too much from England and perhaps expected too little from Russia. As with France, so with England, Dr. Beneš was a little bewitched by the past. He knew from

history the liberal confident England of the nineteenth century when politics could be swayed by the intellectual combats of Gladstone and Disraeli; and he knew from experience during the Four Years War an England still governed by cultured educated men, an England of which the Prime Minister could offer to take the chair at Masaryk's inaugural lecture. After the Four Years War he continued to judge England by the scholars and writers who found their way to Prague. He could not know that the old governing class in England was in full decay; that between Asquith and Churchill England would have no Prime Minister who could follow a word of Masaryk's argument; that the newer social forces had not yet attained to political maturity; and that appeals which once convinced a Cecil or a Balfour would find an uncomprehending ear in their successors. In the new Czechoslovakia educational achievement was the greatest of distinctions. How could even the wisest of Czechoslovaks know that in England education and knowledge was a decisive bar to political influence? In England between the wars an intellectual Gresham's Law operated: folly and prejudice triumphed automatically over understanding and foresight. No country was more respected by the educated classes in England than Czechoslovakia; but this class was without political influence except of a negative kind—whatever it supported was disdained by England's rulers and repudiated by the electorate.

In regard to Russia, too, the experiences of the Four Years' War put later judgments out of focus. In 1917 Tsarist power collapsed; and the Bolsheviks, in their early Utopian phase, were under the spell of universalist dogmas, which allowed no room for national interests or for the common traditions of the Slav peoples. The project of the Third International was surpassed in unreality only by the project of the League of Nations; and it took the Russian leaders almost as long to awaken from their schematic dreams. Dr. Beneš could not be untouched by the universal mistake of the early nineteen

twenties, particularly when it was shared by the Soviet statesmen. There was a time, undoubtedly, when he exaggerated the western element in Czechoslovak life and when he forgot that deeper than the western and democratic character of Czechoslovakia lay the Slav bond which must always draw Czechoslovakia closer to Russia than to any other European power. Certainly Dr. Beneš sought to bring Russia back into the European order. His early efforts of 1922 were defeated by the dogmatic suspicions of the Bolsheviks, which led them instead to form a 'league of the defeated' with Germany. Only in 1935 did the Czech-Soviet treaty provide the crowning achievement of the Beneš system in its old form. Still even then he thought of the alliance with Russia as supplementary to the Franco-Soviet treaty and even to the Anglo-Czech friendship rather than the other way round. But the mistake was not surprising. Dr. Beneš was late in grasping the full truth about Russia. But the Russian leaders were later still. Even at the end of the nineteen thirties they had hardly an inkling that Russia would soon become the mainstay of liberty and security on the continent of Europe or that she would resume her traditional duty of gathering the Slav peoples into a free defensive association. In this case, as so often, though Dr. Beneš erred, he erred far less than any one else in Europe.

Metternich said in exile: "Error has never approached my spirit." The Metternich system therefore was rigid, sterile and doomed to failure. The Beneš system has grown with events, until it has now become the basis of the European order of the future. The Anglo-Soviet alliance, closely co-operating with France on the one side and with Czechoslovakia on the other, is the only path to European peace; and in this structure of alliances Czechoslovakia, though the smallest of the four, is the most important link. Thus has a brighter future been born from the sufferings of the past. In the Europe of the nineteen thirties no wisdom or diplomatic cunning could have saved the different countries from German conquest. In

the absence of an Anglo-Soviet alliance they were all doomed; the important thing was to go down in such a way as to come up again. This was the great historic achievement of Dr. Beneš. He could not avert the destruction of Czechoslovakia, but he could ensure its resurrection. Beck, Stoyadinovic, Antonescu and Bonnet despised his integrity and prided themselves on their cunning; but their countries, too, all fell before the German aggressor and every step they took has made the resurrection of their countries more difficult.

The foreign policy of Dr. Beneš during the present war has won for Czechoslovakia a secure future. But this foreign policy is the expression of the political understanding of the Czechoslovak people. Only a people politically mature would have maintained Dr. Beneš in office for twenty years and be now awaiting his home-coming. History has laid on Czechoslovakia a heavy task. She must stand in the front rank against the German onslaught; she must interpret Russia to the western world and must interpret the western world to Russia. She will be the keystone of the European order of free national states. The foreign policy of Dr. Beneš is the assurance that Czechoslovakia will accomplish this task; and to pay tribute to Dr. Beneš is to pay tribute to the whole Czechoslovak people.

S. HARRISON THOMSON

Eduard Beneš and the Traditions of Czechoslovak Foreign Relations

It would be difficult to find a period of modern history that has seen more continuous change in the personnel of European governments than the interbellum period of 1919 to 1938. In every country of Europe ministries came and went. A few individual ministers managed to survive cabinet shifts for relatively long periods of time. But of only one European country could it be said that a responsible minister of 1918 held political leadership uninterruptedly for twenty years after the Armistice of 1918. That country is Czechoslovakia, and that statesman Eduard Beneš. The October 1938 resignation, contrary to the will of the Czechoslovak people, may be dismissed as irrelevant to the present consideration.

The fact that this long and uninterrupted tenure of office took place in a free and highly responsive democracy, where political leadership expected to be called to give frequent account of its stewardship and, if unsatisfactory, retire, only heightens its significance. It is certainly not to be explained by any absence of opposition, for from the first days of his return to Prague from the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Beneš faced determined and experienced opposition. It is axiomatic that a coherent and free opposition is an index of health in the body politic. Indeed, upon the young shoulders of Beneš fell the brunt of a two-fold opposition, and some of the blows that were really aimed at President Masaryk were directed at the younger member of the partnership. Yet at no time in those two decades and more was there any real danger that the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs, for a country in Czechoslovakia's situation more important than the premiership, would go to any one else.

Such a phenomenon of political stability, in a world of constant uncertainty in matters of cabinet continuity, calls for an explanation. Because Czechoslovakia was a freely functioning and politically mature democracy, it has to be assumed that the people of the country were fundamentally satisfied with the work Beneš was doing, and the political philosophy that motivated his administration of the foreign relations of the State. The Czechoslovak people must have felt that he represented their hopes and aspirations in foreign policy in the most adequate fashion possible. If that had not been the case even President Masaryk's support and approval would not have been sufficient to keep him in office. But this does not tell the whole story.

One of the primary factors in this case is to be found in the approach of the Czechoslovak people to all their political problems. They are now, as they always have been throughout their history, profoundly aware of the implications of their geographical position in the centre of Europe. The oft-quoted remark of Bismarck that he who is master of Bohemia is master of Europe could hardly have elicited from them anything but a smile. Since the days of Samo in the seventh century they have known and acted on a sure realization of the truth Bismarck had discovered a little late. Prince Václav at the beginning of the tenth century, and since then all the rulers of Bohemia have been able to command the loyalty and respect of their people in proportion as they acted on that principle. The peasants and the townsfolk may not have been geopoliticians, but they knew well two facts and a deduction from them, of cardinal importance for their survival: their land was surrounded by Germans on three sides, and their beloved mountains formed a protective wall between them and their natural enemies. If these natural enemies were allowed to spread their rule within this natural protective wall, the freedom of their own land and that of the whole Danube basin would disappear.

The people of Czechoslovakia are furthermore deeply grounded in their own history, and they have understood its democratic and humanitarian philosophy. The leading characters of Czechoslovak history have not been acknowledged as great by this people because they added territory to their domain, but rather for qualities of heart and mind. Without an appreciation of this cast of the Czechoslovak mind it is quite impossible to understand the place of Beneš in modern Czechoslovakia.

For Beneš to have commanded the free support of the Czechoslovak people for so long he must have fitted into this traditional pattern of humanitarian and democratic thought. It is a simple truism of political history that a free people will not willingly support a leader whom they do not understand, nor commit their fate into the hands of one who does not truly represent them.

What then are these traditional ideas of Czechoslovak policy, hammered out on the anvil of their history, and deeply ingrained in the people, that Eduard Beneš has so well understood and so patiently and consistently laboured to realize?

We are accustomed to think of foreign policy as a modern concept. It is, as a matter of fact, as old as the State. From the earliest years for which we have any records, we hear of the antipathy between Czech and German. Palacký, the great Czech historian of the nineteenth century, even went so far as to declare that " the essential content of Czech history was a perpetual struggle between the German and the Slav elements." This view has been widely held. But it calls for some clarification and no little discrimination. The Czech princes of the Přemyslid line were frequently at war with the German emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, ruling over lands to the north and west of Bohemia. Even when the titular heads of the Empire were of their own Luxembourg dynasty, the feeling of the Czechs against the Germans in their midst reached its clearest expression. When German

students and professors at the University of Prague, early in the fifteenth century, adopted one set of philosophic doctrines, the Czechs took an opposite stand. In the succeeding centuries this pattern of antipathies was complicated because much of Luther's teaching was congenial to the anti-papal Bohemians, and some of their strongest nationalistic-minded leaders were of German blood. On the other hand their rulers were, after 1526, the Habsburgs, who, though German in blood and language, were at odds with the German princes to the north of the mountains. The antipathy of the Czechs then came to be focussed less upon Germans as such than upon their specific German overlords, the Habsburgs. Indeed, at one point in the seventeenth century the Czech estates so modified their anti-German bias as to elect the German Palatine, Frederick, to be their King; and over a hundred years later repeated the gesture of defiance against the Habsburgs by electing the Duke of Bavaria to the throne. Their experience with Metternich and Habsburg absolutism in the nineteenth century only deepened their hatred of Austrian Germanism, and to a degree, particularly for some years after 1848, they looked beyond the mountains to a temporarily more liberal Germany with some warmth. But when the aggressive intentions of Bismarckian imperial Germany became clear to them, it was only natural for thinking Czechs and Slovaks to come to a conviction that all Germans, Austrian or Reich, looked upon the Slavs as potential vassals.

But this conviction was arrived at only after the Germans had given more than adequate justification for it. It was by no means an *idée fixe* among the Czechs. How readily they could be persuaded to be friendly with neighbours of German blood may be seen by their attitude toward the post-1918 Austrian Republic. When Austria was no longer in a position to oppress them the Czechs were among the first and most generous to give moral and financial support to a republic unpracticed in self-government and economic self-sufficiency.

The antipathy of the Czechs and Slovaks for their German neighbours and oppressors has been, throughout history, in direct proportion to the Habsburg or Reich German aggressiveness and oppression. It has never been an unreasoned antagonism, but has on the contrary given way to a willingness and even an eagerness to establish friendly relations, to exchange the fruits of their several cultural endeavours. In this way and to this extent only can anti-Germanism be called a dominant feature of Czechoslovak traditional foreign policy as the Czechoslovak people themselves feel and engender it.

The course of Beneš's opinions on the problems of German-Czechoslovak relations illustrates with great precision the reaction of his nation to the ebb and flow of German aggressiveness through the centuries. In 1916 he wrote from Paris with cold logic and complete prophetic accuracy: "We must not forget that the German people are carrying on this war. If defeated they will not seek out those responsible for their defeat where they are really to be found, but will strive to carry out their plans by another way. So developed and self-conscious a people will never give up a deeply-rooted idea, even in the midst of complete defeat." Without altering in the slightest degree this fundamental conviction, when the war was over, he made every effort to adjust Czechoslovakia's relations to Germany along friendly lines. He reported to the Czechoslovak Parliament on February 24th, 1920, that it was his conviction that "the great majority of the population . . . in Germany . . . earnestly wishes for a genuine peace. As we are an interested party in this matter, it is our duty, not only to defend the Peace Treaty in every respect, but also to do all in our power to reach an honest agreement." This line was consistently followed until the stirring of German aggressiveness in the early '30s shook the foundations of peaceful collaboration between the two states.

In 1934, shortly after the National Socialist version of Pan-Germanism came into power, Beneš took occasion to remark:

"Since the beginning of our national independence we have always been surrounded by the Germanic sea, and we have always known how to protect ourselves, whether by alliance or military defences, or political ententes." Having issued this simple but unmistakable warning, in subsequent years until the war broke out, Beneš had repeatedly to point out that, since the ancient Pan-German expansionism had again and easily gained the upper hand in Germany it was apparent that the leopard had not changed his spots, and that Germany was still German. This was the judgment of the whole Czechoslovak people in 1938 and 1939, as it had been, for the most part, throughout the centuries. The long experience of a thousand years was being telescoped into two short decades. The parallelism between present and past was complete, and the Czechoslovak people knew full well that Beneš sensed the parallelism clearly and accurately.

A corollary of this reasoned and historically grounded anti-Germanism among the Czechoslovaks is the deep desire of this people for the independence and sovereignty of their state. The crucial periods in their history that point this aim are many and decisive. They rallied behind a foreign leader in the seventh century who urged them to drive out their Avar oppressors. They supported native princes who gained independence from the successors of Charlemagne in the ninth century. Their kings could count on popular favour in the thirteenth century when dealing with the powerful Hohenstaufen Emperors. Then the people realized full well that they were an integral part of the Western world and would have to find their place in the framework of the all-embracing empire. But that place was unique. The Kings of Bohemia, unlike other princes of the Empire, were sovereign monarchs within the boundaries of the Kingdom. The Emperor could not even set foot within its borders nor levy a penny's tax without the King's permission. The pride of the people of the kingdom was heightened when their kings insisted on

virtual independence of imperial jurisdiction. Conversely, any king who extended privileges to German immigrants or invited German miners or craftsmen or merchants into the land was certain to hear the protests of peasant and townsman. No Czech wanted the kingdom's independence to be weakened by German influence at court. In succeeding centuries, through the estates, the sovereign rights of the kingdom were asserted time after time, and foreign candidates for the throne were plainly told of the complete freedom of the kingdom from outside pressure of any sort. This proud feeling of being a state with a glorious past was shared by the highest noble and the humblest peasant.

In fighting so tenaciously for his land's independent existence at Masaryk's side during the last war, at the Peace Conference, in all his years as Foreign Minister, as President and in exile, Beneš has embodied the deepest hopes of his people. He has had personal detractors, just as his country has had its enemies. He has had difficulties in his diplomatic activity, as his country has had its times of bitter travail. Much of his difficulty has been due to misunderstanding of his aims. Fellow diplomats may have found it inconvenient to listen to what he said, by their very training being estopped from believing that any man could mean what he said. In other quarters Beneš and his country found condescension. Some of the diplomatic and consular representatives of the United States to Czechoslovakia were hardly better chosen than Lord Runciman, and their effort to understand the country to which they were accredited hardly more sincere. What right they had to such an attitude of amused contempt remains obscure. In still other quarters, notably in sections of the Anglo-Saxon press, there was bitter opposition to Czechoslovakia's Little Entente policy. This stand seemed to be taken out of sympathy for Hungary or Austria. The spirit behind Munich needs only to be mentioned to complete the picture which, taken in its entirety, could scarcely be said to have made Beneš's task of

establishing and furthering the independence of the small nations within an orderly European system an easy one. Yet the Czechoslovak people treasured their traditions of freedom and self-government for which their ancestors had fought and died. Their will to maintain it, once it was back in their own hands, was grimly firm. They could therefore understand the persistence and dogged resourcefulness of their Foreign Minister and later President in his dealings with the rest of the European family of nations. To them his policy was simple and clear: their state must earn the respect of the older and larger states for its moderation, sobriety, political candour, and its unfailing willingness to collaborate in the preservation of peace and the furtherance of understanding among nations. Again it is manifest why Beneš so precisely represented the corporate tradition and will of the Czechoslovak people.

An ancient Saxon chronicler had differentiated between the Slav and the Teuton by describing the former as interested primarily in peace and tilling his own soil. The German, however, according to this Saxon writer, preferred the clang of battle and the glory of conquest. The East Prussian Romanticist, Herder, again gave voice to this judgment of the peace-loving nature of the Slav. As a general axiom it is certainly open to serious objections. The Slavs have always had their share of belligerency. But it is certainly true that the Czechs and particularly the Slovaks have not been among the more militarily aggressive peoples of Europe. If we may judge by their heroes, the Czechoslovaks are not a warlike people. They have had their Zizka, but he was a reluctant warrior, defending the freedom of his people and their faith against repeated attacks by their German neighbours. This people has had no Frederick II, no Charles XII, no Napoleon. The real heroes of the Czechoslovak people have not been their military leaders. Hus, Chelčický, Komenský, Kollár, Havlíček, Palacký, Masaryk, these are their heroes, and they have been heroes of the spirit, not of the sword. The Czecho-

slovaks have wanted, during most of their history, to be left alone behind their mountains. An early fourteenth century Czech chronicler cried out: ". . . the proper thing is for the bear to stay in his forest, the wolf in his cave, the fish in the sea, and the German in Germany. In that way the world would have some peace."

A European peace based on the general recognition of a common humanity was the burden of the thought of Komenský in the seventeenth, as it was of Havlíček and of Masaryk in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Beneš wrote in 1941:

> ". . . every Czechoslovak, if he is politically educated, thinks in European and not in Czechoslovak terms. Throughout all Czech history and culture a feeling for Bohemia has always been associated with a feeling for Europe and for humanity in general. . . . Our future lies in moral strength, in spiritual maturity and education, in the power deriving from the unity of the nation, in liberty and peace, defended in co-operation with all men of good will in the rest of Europe. As a consequence we are for peace, we are for the League of Nations, for freedom, for democracy, for religious and moral progress."

The Czech and the Slovak people together, set off by their mountain wall, are not one of the populous national states. They have gladly accepted this limitation, insisting only that they would keep their individuality and proudly make their contribution to the sum of European culture. As they looked about them they saw two kinds of states: one large and powerful, expansive and proud; the other kind, like themselves, small, limited by geography or the numbers of their neighbours, naturally suspicious of the designs of the larger and expansive powers. The Czechs have throughout their history been desirous of getting these smaller peoples to unite their forces for their own defence against the giants on their borders. In the late thirteenth century the Czech king,

Přemysl Otakar II, asked the Polish king to join with him to defend their common interest against the aggression of the Habsburg Emperor. At the beginning of the Thirty Years War Bohemian diplomacy sought, rather unsuccessfully, to convince some of the neighbouring smaller states to join with the Bohemian estates to combat the ambitious Habsburgs. For a variety of reasons, but mostly from an unwillingness to face the entrenched power of the dynasty, almost none of these smaller states whose true interests were at stake chose to join in the struggle.

For three hundred years, under Habsburg rule, there was no opportunity for the Czechs and Slovaks to co-operate actively with any other people. But the literature of these centuries richly reveals their deep feeling that the cause of all small nations was their cause. Though they never forgot that they were Slavs, their interests were by no means limited to Pan-Slavist aims. The liberal Magyars of 1848, the struggles of the Irish people during the nineteenth century, the aspirations of the Greeks and the Roumanians for freedom, all elicited the warm sympathies of the Czechs and Slovaks. Leading Czech representatives attended the Pan-Slav Conference in Moscow in 1867, but its meagre results were not a source of great disappointment in Bohemia. The cause of this small Slavic people was a larger and more radical one—the freedom and independence of all the smaller nations of Europe. This was the doctrine of Masaryk for all his years of political activity, and it was and is the conviction of Beneš.

Beneš was most active in the delicate preliminary negotiations between the Poles, the Yugoslavs, the Italians and the Roumanians that finally resulted in the Congress of Oppressed Peoples that met at Rome in the spring of 1918. The burden of his argument in these conversations was the common interest of the smaller nations, their need for each other, and the ultimate political logic of their co-operation. In these same years before the Peace Conference he was also laying the

ground-work for the Little Entente, fortunately finding a sympathetic response from MM. Ionescu and Pašić, without whose effective collaboration the projected post-war entente would have been impossible. It was largely due to the logic and the spirit of co-operation which Beneš furthered that these small states, in all the deliberations during and after the Peace Conference, cut a much more dignified figure than the larger victorious powers, whose lamentable squabbling was a sad augury for the future. A large measure of the credit for the smooth functioning of the Little Entente has always been given Beneš, and with perfect justice. He remained the connecting link for their united policy, as the only one to remain continuously in office from the beginning of the Entente. Each of the three states had its own delicate problem with a powerful neighbour: Roumania with Russia over Bessarabia; Yugoslavia with Italy over the Adriatic coast; Czechoslovakia with Germany over the question of Austrian *Anschluss*. But these problems, any one of which might have disrupted the association, were handled with tact and candour, and a retrospective judgment of the Little Entente would have to be that, so long as it was permitted to endure, it was a great stabilizing force in European life, more stable indeed, in proportion to the power of the states composing it, than any of the so-called 'Great' powers. This simple and incontrovertible fact has not received the attention it deserves. There is a certain bitter irony to be found in the reflection that, though the 'Great' powers have the strength to wage and 'win' a war, they seem to lack the sagacity and moral strength to assure the preservation of a peace of understanding and good will.

It is Beneš's oft-repeated conviction that the small states, largely by virtue of the distinctiveness of their traditions, geographical situation and their non-aggressive disposition, can, in co-operation, make at least as substantial a contribution to world peace as any single great power of the same total size. The moral value of a living example of frank and

sincere collaboration may be inestimable. It is a proof that the will to peace can prevail. The larger powers have seldom offered any such demonstration.

But neither their proximity to the Germans and Magyars, nor the need the Czechs and Slovaks have frequently felt to co-operate or even ally themselves with a non-Slav people, has ever made them forget that they are Slavs, and bound to their brother Slavs by strong ties of blood and language. Indeed the Czechs and Slovaks have had more reason than any other Slav people to be aware of their Slavic origin, precisely because the German pressure on three sides of their homeland has been more constant and extensive than that felt by any other Slavic people.

The resistance to German domination has always been unbending, yet at all times in their history the Czechoslovaks have gladly received cultural and economic guidance from their German neighbours, generally because the Germans were the intermediaries by which western civilization was brought to Bohemia. The Czechoslovaks have felt their mission to be that of a link between the West and the Slavic East. Whenever Pan-Slavism became popular among the Czechs and Slovaks it was soon tempered by the common realization that they were irrevocably bound both to East and West, and that they could not turn exclusively to one or the other. The realization of this dichotomy has always been the common property of the whole mass of the people. Nor has it been easy to keep the two pulls—Eastern and Western—in even balance. Some of their Slav neighbours may feel that the Czechs and Slovaks have become westernized and have thus deserted the common cause of Slavdom; at times their western neighbours and friends may feel that they too easily turn their eyes to the East. This occasional misunderstanding of their twofold, hinge-like position between East and West is the penalty they must pay for being what and where they are.

From the beginning of his political life Beneš has consist-

ently emphasized the capital importance of a general recognition of Czechoslovakia's mission in bringing East and West into a working unity. Not all his own people have felt this conviction as deeply as he has, and there have been lean years when the Western powers have been unwilling to accept his thesis. But in season and out he has proclaimed that Europe cannot exist in two suspicious halves. In 1924, while Soviet Russia was still not an invited guest at Geneva, and while Bolshevist propaganda had to be combatted in Czechoslovakia, he reported to the Czechoslovak Parliament: "We allow the intentions guiding our policies to speak for themselves: a desire to help the Russian people and to bring Russia, as soon as possible, back to Europe as a political factor, for without Russia there will never be peace in Europe." During his years at the League he urged Russia's inclusion in the League, in 1935 concluded an important interlocking defensive treaty with France and Russia, and since Munich has often repeated his conviction that no European adjustment that disregards the power of Russia can endure. In taking this position Beneš has emphasized, and quite properly, the position of his own people, as Slavs looking East to Russia, as Western in faith and culture looking West. Who better could act as a bridge to connect East and West?

It is a common human trait to see only what is brought very close to us. The great powers of the world, as a general rule, confident in their strength and prestige, have been reluctant to adhere to any arrangement for collective security. The smaller nations saw with a much clearer eye that peace had to be striven for, earned and maintained by all, whereas one single disturber could bring the catastrophe of war on all the others. History here only sadly repeats itself. The fact that it has been to the advantage of the smaller nations to understand this simple fact, and to promote the general peace does not make the truth any the less imposing, nor wilful ignorance of it any the less tragic.

The plan of the Hussite King, George of Poděbrady, in the fifteenth century, suggesting a union of European princes "*pro pace et unione*" was the first example of a European ruler favouring voluntary participation in a collective plan for peace. Komenský was in this tradition when in 1667 he urged in his Angel of Peace the rulers of Western Europe to join, in the interests of general peace, in establishing peace courts and organs for international consultation and arbitration. Palacký in 1848 suggested "that a general European Congress of Nations be summoned for the discussion of all international questions, being thoroughly convinced that free nations will more easily come to agreement than paid diplomats."

It would be difficult to name any statesman or political leader who, during the interbellum period, more consistently or more ably represented this tradition of international mutuality and reciprocal assurance of peace and justice than Beneš. His patient and effective work at the League of Nations in this direction gained him a name for working miracles of adjustment between disputant League members. All his conciliatory activity was motivated by the same single principle, that the nations of Europe, in their own interest, must live with their neighbours in understanding and sincerity. Every separate disagreement must be viewed in the light of the larger principle. The very simplicity and consistency of his adherence to the broad principles of a democratic world upon which the League had founded set him apart from most of the statesmen at Geneva. He was far from blind to the shortcomings in the functioning of the League. But one of the more effective ways to make any humanly constituted organism work is to emphasize and employ its better features. This approach is a part of what Beneš so frequently refers to as Czechoslovakia's policy of 'optimism.'

There is no statesman in the world to-day who has less reason to fear lest pronouncements or decisions made ten or twenty years ago might be brought forward to accuse him

than Beneš. He would be the last to deny that any given judgment of his at Versailles, at Geneva or in Prague may have been inadequately formulated or perhaps less accurate than could be wished. But it can be said with every assurance that he has always sought the guidance of the combined logic of fundamental trends in European political development and the logic of present circumstances as applied to his country. In this regard he is in the tradition of the great Czechoslovak leaders from the ninth century to Thomas Masaryk. A free and democratic Czechoslovakia in a free and democratic Europe has been the hope and aspiration of this small nation for ten centuries. Either without the other is, and has been, unthinkable. Beneš has devoted himself absolutely to the effectuation of that hope of his people in the present age. He deserves well not only of Czechoslovakia and all Europe, but of the whole troubled world.

PROF. R. W. SETON-WATSON

Beneš and Masaryk

THERE is a proverb in many languages which says "Tell me what sort of friends a man makes, and I will tell you what sort of man he is." In the history of the nations this saying takes a somewhat different form. "Tell me what sort of leaders a nation chooses, and I shall be able to form some opinion of the national character." On this basis the Czechs have an unusual record, for the men whom they have taken to their hearts are for the most part not men of high lineage or military accomplishments (though among them are that wise and devout statesman Charles IV and the Cromwellian figure of Jan Žižka), but men who owed their reputation to high idealism, intellectual gifts and tenacity of purpose. In the fifteenth century John Hus and Peter Chelčický, in the seventeenth Comenius, in the early nineteenth that little band of pioneers who made an almost dead language live again, and laid the foundations of the Czech National Renaissance—a movement which, as an ardent act of faith in the teeth of all reasonable expectation, has not its equal in the modern era of Nationality.

And in our own century that act of faith was repeated when an elderly professor of philosophy in the University of Prague, supported by two young men in their early thirties, of whom neither the general public nor (providentially) the Austrian police had ever heard, set themselves the formidable task of restoring the lost liberties of Bohemia and linking the fate of the Slovaks with that of their Czech kinsmen.

It is entirely superfluous, at the present anniversary, to dwell upon the familiar story of their co-operation and their ultimate success. But there are certain aspects of the story that do not always receive sufficient emphasis. The unique authority in

matters of the mind which Masaryk had so long enjoyed, gave him a certain obvious pre-eminence, and the fact that none of his political contemporaries of the first rank had either found it possible to escape from Austria or been ready to face the same risk for himself and his family, did in some ways facilitate his shaping of policy, though at first his solitary position quite naturally led the statesmen of the west to reserve judgment as to his right to speak on behalf of his colleagues at home. But in proportion as the elderly professor showed himself able to recruit an army in Russia and rally its allegiance to himself, while the young astronomer Štefánik became a daring airman, winning the confidence of the Italian High Command by signal exploits on the Italian and Balkan fronts, and while Beneš, the young lecturer in economics, combined mobility, tactical skill and that idealism tempered by realism which sums up the elder statesman's political creed—so in proportion did the Allies familiarize themselves with the audacious programme of Czech independence and Czecho-Slovak unity, and end by adopting it as their own.

It has been argued, with some degree of plausibility, that under the new post-war situation a rift would inevitably have opened between Štefánik, the ardent Slovak, and his two colleagues in the Triumvirate. This argument always seemed to me both captious and disingenuous—indeed in its own way little less perfidious than Tuka's theory of the "*vacuum juris*" or the still cruder tales of Czecho-Slovak discord put about by the enemy. I believe, on the contrary (on the basis of some intimate talks with Stefánik in Rome in the spring of 1918), that nothing would have availed to shake his loyalty, and that if his fragile health had stood the strain, he would have proved an even more redoubtable champion of Czechoslovak unity in time of peace than in time of war. But without digressing farther from the main line of my argument, I can certainly affirm that rarely were three men, for all their differences of temperament, more firmly linked together in the fulfilment of

high purposes. As the reputation of the President Liberator stood so high both at home and abroad, the critics found it easier to depict him as the impeccable chief and to saddle the younger man with a whole series of imperfections and blunders that were all his own. In reality the two saw eye to eye on almost every detail of policy, not of course on a basis of instructions to a subordinate, but of a constant and keen exchange of arguments and opinions. No one was more impatient of this myth of disagreement than Masaryk himself, who once said to Karel Čapek "Without Beneš there would have been no Republic"—meaning among many other things that the burden was far too great for any single pair of shoulders to bear.

Let there be no doubt about it (and neither of the two men ever countenanced the myth), the policy of Czechoslovakia, right on till 1937, was a joint policy shared between them, for which there is no parallel in the history of modern Europe. This is the solid foundation upon which rested an uninterrupted tenure of office for three years of exile, followed by seventeen years at the Foreign Office and three more as President.

Attempts have been made to find a parallel *(lucus a non lucendo)* with the Emperor Francis, who held Metternich in continuous office from 1809 to 1835: but there is no real analogy. That most hidebound and pedantic of autocrats came to be utterly dependent upon his versatile minister, but could at any moment have thrown him out of office at his own good pleasure. Indeed there is an authentic anecdote of Metternich himself assuring a Russian general in the suite of Tsar Nicholas, that for all the mutual devotion that had so long prevailed between him and Francis, the latter always remained the master and would not have hesitated to dispense with his great Chancellor's services if he had detected any resistance to his supreme will. Masaryk, on the contrary, as a constitutional ruler, not merely admitted Beneš to his counsels

as an equal, but on two occasions had to fight hard against powerful parties which wished for Beneš's head on a charger; and he finally threw his whole weight into the balance to ensure the succession to the presidency for one who was *par excellence* his spiritual disciple and political legatee. In hostile quarters there has sometimes been talk of the 'jealousy' between the two men: but the absurdity of this becomes instantly apparent if we remember that it was Masaryk who resisted every effort to eject Beneš from the conduct of foreign affairs, and who from first to last made it clear that Beneš was not merely 'his' candidate for the succession, but a candidate who stood head and shoulders above all others. In a word, it is impossible to separate Beneš and Masaryk: they stand or fall together. This much is certain, whatever may be the final verdict of history upon that unique experiment, the Czechoslovak Republic.

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During the Great War I had many opportunities of discussing with Masaryk and with Beneš their policy and aims—with the former in Rotterdam in 1914 and Geneva in February, 1915, and from the summer of that year till the spring of 1917 repeatedly in London; with the latter at intervals from the winter of 1915 onwards, during his visits to London and during my naturally much rarer visits to Paris and Rome. What remains most clearly in my mind was this essential unity of pattern, wherever major questions were concerned: and periodical talks in Prague, in the radically transformed conditions of the post-war period, only served to confirm this view. At our earlier meetings I came as one eager for a solution such as would satisfy Czech and Polish aspirations, but also as one who was not convinced of the practicability of a full programme of independence in either case. There was as yet no question of a Republic, though the prospect of a Russian Prince upon the Bohemian throne (the solution favoured by Kramář and his supporters) caused Masaryk very

real disquiet. In his first endeavours to convince his English friends he laid considerable stress upon the need for a common frontier with Russia as something against which the united Czech and Slovak state could lean. We were of course speaking at a moment when rumblings of Revolution could be heard in Russia, but both the first and second Revolutions were still on the knees of the gods, and when the prospect of Eastern Galicia merging in some federal Ukrainian unit under the Tsar's crown was at least as probable as what eventually materialized. When the Provisional Government took over from the Tsarist regime, it was but natural that Masaryk should welcome the accession of power of a number of his friends of the Left: but when they proved unequal to the heavy task and yielded place to far more radical elements, his realism reasserted itself and he urged upon his friends in America and in the Western democracies the necessity for accepting accomplished and no longer reversible facts. In particular he argued that there were certain underlying common interests between Russia and Britain that transcended the acute ideological differences of the moment and pointed towards a working alliance. His advice, disregarded at the time by all of us, unofficial no less than official, reads strangely in the light of the international alignments which were forced upon Europe and America twenty-five years later. It certainly entitles us to regard him as the most realistic and prophetic among the statesmen of the Great War, especially when we remember that he alone worked from the first winter of the war according to a far-reaching programme of European reconstruction, and that, while always ready to adjust his tactics to meet unforseen developments, he never for a moment lost sight of certain fundamental principles without which Czechoslovakia could not live and function.

In all this the two men saw eye to eye and were able to work harmoniously on parallel lines, even while separated by half the world. Undaunted by events that seemed, for the time at

any rate, to eliminate Russia from any decisive influence upon the settlement, they set themselves to realize their programme with the help of the Western Allies and America: and their efforts were rewarded by recognition, in successive stages political and military, culminating in the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak State. Some students of affairs regard it as their crowning achievement that they were able to attain their full programme of independence without that backing from Russia which they had begun by regarding as indispensable, and indeed in face of pronounced hostility from the Trotskyite extremists during the Russian civil war. There are, it is true, others who in the light of events between 1917 and 1944 have reached the conclusion that the original calculation of Masaryk and Beneš was the right one, and that only by a close alliance with Russia can Czechoslovakia hope to maintain her full independence in so exposed a geographical situation in Europe. From this to the Czecho-Soviet Treaty of 1935 there is a perfectly logical sequence of events; and this act of state, the culmination of Dr. Beneš's long term of office as Foreign Minister, had the full endorsement of the President-Liberator as he handed over to him the direction of affairs. The disasters of the Munich period, involving on the one hand the loss of Czechoslovak independence and the ignominious surrender of the Western Powers, and on the other Moscow's temporary submission to Hitler's dictation, may be regarded as a sort of interregnum, and the new Czecho-Soviet Treaty of December 12th, 1943 as a resumption of the broken threads of policy.

Whatever the future may hold in store, it would seem probable that Czechoslovakia (it may be hoped in close and friendly accord with Poland) will perform an important function as a link between Eastern and Western tendencies in Europe, and that the impetus in this direction deliberately given by the two first Presidents is not likely to lessen in the post-war period. It was not for nothing that Providence

endowed that small country, set in the heart of the Continent and coveted by more than one neighbour, with men of such rare vision and balanced mind. First and foremost Beneš, like Masaryk before him, is a Slav and therefore an Easterner, driven by his reason to regard Russia as the decisive factor in the development, and indeed in the very survival, of the Slav peoples as a whole. But at the same time a long tradition, compounded of political, ethical and cultural elements, unites him with the democracies of the West, with France, with Britain and with America, and confirms him in the belief that his people have a valuable function to perform as intermediary and interpreter between two such different worlds as the Slavonic and the Anglo-Saxon—two worlds so utterly different in temperament or method, and at times impatient of each other, yet predestined for mutual understanding if Europe is to be saved from German totalitarianism.

But this balance between East and West also leads logically to an alternative outlook, and it is not accident that Edward Beneš was throughout the inter-war period the untiring and consistent champion of the League of Nations and of every proposal directed towards its further strengthening, and among the first to welcome the Moscow declaration in favour of a new 'international organization' to carry on the work of the former League. In a word, he is a great European, and as such has won recognition from all those statesmen who see beyond their own narrow frontiers the vision of a wider European Commonwealth.

May 1st, 1944





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